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THE COUNT OF MONTE-CRISTO.

VOL. III.





DAWAB SALAT JUNG BAKA M.

THE WORKS OF
ALEXANDRE DUMAS

*The Count of Monte
Cristo*

*Or, The Adventures of
Edmond Dantès*

In Four Volumes

Volume III



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THE COUNT OF MONTE-CRISTO.

CHAPTER LIV.

THE RISE AND FALL OF THE STOCKS.

SOME days after this meeting, Albert de Morcerf visited the Count of Monte-Cristo, at his house in the Champs Elysées, which had already assumed that palace-like appearance which the count's princely fortune enabled him to give even to his most temporary residences. He came to renew the thanks of Madame Danglars, which had been already conveyed to the count through the medium of a letter, signed "Baronne Danglars, *née* Hermine de Servieux." Albert was accompanied by Lucien Debray, who, joining in his friend's conversation, added some passing compliments, the source of which the count's talent for finesse easily enabled him to guess. He was convinced that Lucien's visit to him was to be attributed to a double feeling of curiosity, the larger half of which sentiment emanated from the Rue de la Chaussée d'Antin. In short, Madame Danglars, not being able personally to examine in detail the domestic economy and household arrangements of a man who gave away horses worth thirty thousand francs, and who went to the opera with a Greek slave wearing diamonds to the amount of a million of money, had deputed those eyes by which she was accustomed to see, to give her a faithful account of the mode of life of this incomprehensible individual. But the count did not appear to suspect that there could be the slightest

connection between Lucien's visit and the baronne's curiosity.

"You are in constant communication, then, with the Baron Danglars?" inquired the count of Albert de Morcerf.

"Yes, count; you know what I told you?"

"All remains the same, then, in that quarter?"

"It is more than ever a settled thing," said Lucien. And, considering this remark was all that he was at this time called upon to make, he adjusted the glass to his eyes, and, biting the top of his gold-headed cane, began to make the tour of the apartment, examining the arms and the pictures.

"Ah!" said Monte-Cristo, "I did not expect that the affair would have been so promptly concluded."

"Oh, things take their course without our assistance. Whilst we are forgetting them, they are falling into their appointed order; and when, again, our attention is directed to them, we are surprised at the progress they have made towards the proposed end. My father and M. Danglars served together in Spain; my father in the army, and M. Danglars in the commissariat department. It was there that my father, ruined by the revolution, and M. Danglars, who never had possessed any patrimony, both laid the foundation of their different fortunes."

"Yes," said Monte-Cristo; "I think M. Danglars mentioned that in a visit which I paid him; and," continued he, casting a side-glance at Lucien, who was turning over the leaves of an album, "is Mademoiselle Eugenie pretty — for I think I remember that to be her name?"

"Very pretty, or, rather, very beautiful," replied Albert, "but of that style of beauty which I do not altogether appreciate; I am an ungrateful fellow."

"You speak as if you were already her husband."

"Ah!" returned Albert, in his turn looking around to see what Lucien was doing.

"Really," said Monte-Cristo, lowering his voice, "you do not appear to me to be very enthusiastic on the subject of this marriage."

"Mademoiselle Danglars is too rich for me," replied Morcerf, "and that frightens me."

"Bah!" exclaimed Monte-Cristo, "that's a fine reason to give. Are you not rich yourself?"

"My father's income is about fifty thousand francs per annum; and he will give me perhaps ten or twelve thousand when I marry."

"That perhaps might not be considered a large sum, in Paris especially," said the count; "but everything does not depend on wealth, and it is a fine thing to have a good name, and to occupy a high station in society. Your name is celebrated, your position magnificent; and then the Count de Morcerf is a soldier, and it is pleasing to see the integrity of a Bayard united to the poverty of a Duguesclin. Disinterestedness is the brightest ray in which a noble sword can shine. As for me, I consider the union with Mademoiselle Danglars a most suitable one; she will enrich you, and you will ennoble her."

Albert shook his head, and looked thoughtful.

"There is still something else," said he.

"I confess," said Monte-Cristo, "that I have some difficulty in comprehending your objection to a young lady who is both rich and beautiful."

"Oh!" said Morcerf, "this repugnance, if repugnance it may be called, is not all on my side."

"Whence can it arise, then, for you told me that your father desired the marriage?"

"My mother's is the dissenting voice; she has a clear and penetrating judgment, and does not smile on the proposed union. I cannot account for it, but she seems to entertain some prejudice against the Danglars."

"Ah!" said the count, in a somewhat forced tone, "that may be easily explained. Madame la Comtesse de Morcerf, who is aristocracy and refinement itself, does not relish the

idea of being allied by your marriage with one of ignoble birth; that is natural enough."

"I do not know if that is her reason," said Albert; "but one thing I do know, that if this marriage be consummated, it will render her quite miserable. There was to have been a meeting six weeks ago, in order to talk over and settle the affair; but I had such a sudden attack of indisposition ——"

"Real?" interrupted the count, smiling.

"Oh, real enough — from anxiety, doubtless, — that they postponed the rendezvous for two months longer. There is no hurry, you know; I am not yet twenty-one, and Eugenie is only seventeen years of age; but the two months expire next week. It must be done. My dear count, you cannot imagine how my mind is harassed. How happy you are in being exempted from all this."

"Well, and why should not you be free, too? What prevents you from being so?"

"Oh! it will be too great a disappointment to my father if I do not marry Mademoiselle Danglars."

"Marry her, then," said the count, with a significant shrug of the shoulders.

"Yes," replied Morcerf; "but that will plunge my mother into positive grief."

"Then do not marry her," said the count.

"Well, I shall see. I will try and think over what is the best thing to be done. You will give me your advice, will you not, and, if possible, extricate me from my unpleasant position? Rather than give pain to my excellent mother, I think I would run the risk of offending the count."

Monte-Cristo turned away; he seemed moved by this last remark.

"Ah!" said he to Debray, who had thrown himself into an easy-chair at the furthest extremity of the salon, and who held a pencil in his right hand and an account-book

in his left, "what are you doing there? Are you making a sketch after Poussin?"

"No, no! I am doing something of a very opposite nature to painting. I am engaged with arithmetic."

"Arithmetic?"

"Yes; I am calculating — by the way, Morcerf, that indirectly concerns you — I am calculating what the house of Danglars must have gained by the last rise in Haiti stock. From 206 they have risen to 409 in three days, and the prudent banker had purchased at 206, therefore he must have made 300,000 livres."

"That is not his best stroke of policy," said Morcerf; "did he not gain a million from the Spaniards this last year?"

"My dear fellow," said Lucien, "here is the Count of Monte-Cristo, who will say to you as the Italians do:

" 'Danaro e santita,
Metà della metà.' "

When they tell me such things, I only shrug my shoulders and say nothing."

"But you were speaking of Haiti?" said Monte-Cristo.

"Ah, Haiti! — that is quite another thing! Haiti is the *écarté* of French stock-jobbing. They may like la *bouillotte*, delight in whist, be enraptured with le *boston*, and yet grow tired of all; but they always come back to *écarté* — that is the game *par excellence*. M. Danglars sold yesterday at 405, and pockets 300,000 francs. Had he but waited till to-day, the stocks would have fallen to 205, and instead of gaining 300,000 francs, he would have lost 20,000 or 25,000."

"And what has caused the sudden fall from 409 to 205?" asked Monte-Cristo; "I am profoundly ignorant of all these stock-jobbing intrigues."

"Because," said Albert, laughing, "one piece of news

follows another, and there is often great dissimilarity between them."

"Ah," said the count, "I see that M. Danglars is accustomed to play at gaining or losing 300,000 francs in a day; he must be enormously rich?"

"It is not he who plays," exclaimed Lucien, "it is Madame Danglars; she is indeed daring."

"But you, who are a reasonable being, Lucien, and who know how little dependence is to be placed on the news, since you are at the fountain-head, surely you ought to prevent it," said Morcerf, with a smile.

"How can I, if her husband fails in controlling her?" asked Lucien; "you know the character of the baronne — no one has any influence with her, and she does precisely what she pleases."

"Ah, if I were in your place —" said Albert.

"Well?"

"I would reform her; it would be rendering a service to her future son-in-law."

"How would you set about it?"

"Ah, that would be easy enough — I would give her a lesson."

"A lesson?"

"Yes. Your position as secretary to the minister renders your authority great on the subject of political news; you never open your mouth but the stock-brokers immediately stenograph your words; cause her to lose 200,000 or 300,000 francs in a short space of time, and that would teach her prudence."

"I do not understand," stammered Lucien.

"It is very clear, notwithstanding," replied the young man, with a *naïveté* totally free from all affectation; "tell her some fine morning an unheard-of piece of intelligence — some telegraphic dispatch, of which you alone are in possession of: for instance, that Henry IV. was seen yesterday at the house of Gabrielle; that will cause the funds to rise; she will lay her plans accordingly, and she will

certainly lose when Beauchamp announces the following day in his gazette, 'The report which has been circulated by some individuals, stating the king to have been seen yesterday at Gabrielle's house, is totally without foundation. We can positively assert that his majesty did not quit the Pont Neuf.'"

Lucien half smiled. Monte-Cristo, although apparently indifferent, had not lost one word of this conversation, and his penetrating eye had even read a hidden secret in the embarrassed manner of the secretary. This embarrassment had completely escaped Albert, but it caused Lucien to shorten his visit; he was evidently ill at ease. The count, in taking leave of him, said something in a low voice, to which he answered, "Willingly, M. le comte; I accept your proposal." The count returned to young De Morcerf.

"Do you not think, on reflection," said he to him, "that you have done wrong in thus speaking of your mother-in-law in the presence of M. Debray?"

"M. le comte," said Morcerf, "I beg of you not to apply that title so prematurely."

"Now, speaking without any exaggeration, is your mother really so much averse to this marriage?"

"So much so, that the baronne very rarely comes to the house, and my mother has not, I think, visited Madame Danglars twice in her whole life."

"Then," said the count, "I am emboldened to speak openly to you. M. Danglars is my banker; M. de Villefort has overwhelmed me with politeness in return for a service which a casual piece of good fortune enabled me to render him. I predict from all this an avalanche of dinners and routs. Now, in order not to appear to expect such a proceeding, and also to be beforehand with them, if you like it, I have thought of inviting M. and Madame Danglars, and M. and Madame de Villefort, to my country-house at Auteuil. If I were to invite you and the Count and Countess de Morcerf to this dinner, it would give the

air of a matrimonial rendezvous, or at least Madame de Morcerf would look upon the affair in that light, especially if M. le Baron Danglars did me the honor to bring his daughter. In that case your mother would hold me in aversion; and I do not at all wish that; on the contrary, I desire to occupy a prominent place in her esteem."

"Indeed, count," said Morcerf, "I thank you sincerely for having used so much candor towards me, and I gratefully accept the exclusion which you propose to me. You say you desire my mother's good opinion; I assure you, it is already yours to a very unusual extent."

"Do you think so?" said Monte-Cristo, with interest.

"Oh, I am sure of it; we talked of you an hour after you left us the other day. But to return to what we were saying. If my mother could know of this attention on your part—and I will venture to tell her—I am sure that she will be most grateful to you: it is true that my father will be equally angry."

The count laughed.

"Well," said he to Morcerf, "but I think your father will not be the only angry one: M. and Mme. Danglars will think me a very ill-mannered person. They know that I am intimate with you—that you are, in fact, one of the oldest of my Parisian acquaintances, and they will not find you at my house; they will certainly ask me why I did not invite you. Be sure to provide yourself with some previous engagement which shall have a semblance of probability, and communicate the fact to me by a line in writing. You know that with bankers nothing but a written document will be valid."

"I will do better than that," said Albert; "my mother is wishing to go to the seaside—what day is fixed for your dinner?"

"Saturday."

"This is Tuesday—well! to-morrow evening we leave, and the day after we shall be at Treport. Really, M. le comte, you are a charming person to set people at their ease,"

"Indeed, you give me more credit than I deserve; I only wish to do what will be agreeable to you, that is all."

"When shall you send your invitations?"

"This very day."

"Well, I will immediately call on M. Danglars, and tell him that my mother and myself leave Paris to-morrow. I have not seen you, consequently I know nothing of your dinner."

"How foolish you are!—have you forgotten that M. Debray has just seen you at my house?"

"Ah, true!"

"On the contrary, I have seen you, and invited you without any ceremony, when you instantly answered that it would be impossible for you to be amongst the number of my guests, as you were going to Treport."

"Well, then, that is settled; but you will come and call on my mother before to-morrow?"

"Before to-morrow?—that will be a difficult matter to arrange; besides, I shall just be in the way of all the preparations for departure."

"You were only a charming man before, but if you accede to my proposal, you will be adorable."

"What must I do to attain such a height?"

"You are to-day free as air—come and dine with me; we shall be a small party—only yourself, my mother, and I. You have scarcely seen my mother; you shall have an opportunity of observing her more closely. She is a remarkable woman, and I only regret that there does not exist another who resembles her, about twenty years younger; in that case, I assure you, there would very soon be a Countess and Viscountess de Moreerf. As to my father, you will not see him; he is officially engaged, and dines with M. le grand referendaire. We will talk over our travels; and you, who have seen the whole world, will relate your adventures—you shall tell us the history of the beautiful Greek who was with you the other night at the opera, and whom you call your slave, and yet treat like

a princess. We will talk Italian and Spanish. Come, accept my invitation, and my mother will thank you."

"A thousand thanks," said the count — "your invitation is most gracious, and I regret exceedingly that it is not in my power to accept it. I am not so much at liberty as you supposed; on the contrary, I have a most important engagement."

"Ah, take care; you were teaching me just now how, in case of an invitation to dinner, one might creditably make an excuse. I require the proof of a pre-engagement. I am not a banker like M. Danglars, but I am quite as incredulous as he is."

"I am going to give you a proof," replied the count, and he rang the bell.

"Humph!" said Morcerf, "this is the second time you have refused to dine with my mother; it is evident you wish to avoid her."

Monte-Cristo started.

"Oh, you do not mean that," said he; "besides, here comes the confirmation of my assertion."

Baptistin entered, and remained standing at the door.

"I had no previous knowledge of your visit, had I?"

"Indeed, you are such an extraordinary person, that I would not answer for it."

"At all events, I could not guess that you would invite me to dinner?"

"Probably not."

"Well, listen; Baptistin, what did I tell you this morning when I called you into my laboratory?"

"To close the door against visitors as soon as the clock struck five," replied the valet.

"What then?"

"Ah, M. le comte —" said Albert.

"No, no, I wish to do away with that mysterious reputation that you have given me, my dear viscount; it is tiresome to be always acting Manfred. I wish my life to be free and open. Go on, Baptistin."

"Then to admit no one except M. le Major Bartolomeo Cavalcanti and his son."

"You hear: Major Bartolomeo Cavalcanti — a man who ranks amongst the most ancient nobility of Italy, whose name Dante has celebrated in the tenth canto of 'L'Inferno;' you remember it, do you not? Then, there is his son, a charming young man about your own age, viscount, bearing the same title as yourself, and who is making his *entrée* into the Parisian world, aided by his father's millions. The major will bring his son with him this evening, the *contino*, as we say in Italy; he confides him to my care. If he prove himself worthy of it, I will do what I can to advance his interests; you will assist me in the work, will you not?"

"Most undoubtedly! This Major Cavalcanti is an old friend of yours, then?"

"By no means. He is a perfect nobleman, very polite, modest, and agreeable, such as may be found constantly in Italy, descendants of very ancient families. I have met him several times at Florence, Bologna, and Lucca, and he has now communicated to me the fact of his arrival in this place. The acquaintances one makes in travelling have a sort of claim on one; they everywhere expect to receive the same attention which you once paid them by chance; as though the civilities of a passing hour were likely to awaken any lasting interest in favor of the man in whose society you may happen to be thrown in the course of your journey. This good Major Cavalcanti is come to take a second view of Paris, which he only saw in passing through in the time of the Empire, when he was on his way to Moscow. I shall give him a good dinner; he will confide his son to my care; I will promise to watch over him; I shall let him follow in whatever path his folly may lead him, and then I shall have done my part."

"Certainly; I see you are a precious Mentor," said Albert. "Good-bye; we shall return on Sunday. By the way, I have received news of Franz."

"Have you? Is he still amusing himself in Italy?"

"I believe so; however, he regrets your absence extremely. He says you were the sun of Rome, and that without you all appears dark and cloudy. I do not know if he does not even go so far as to say that it rains."

"His opinion of me is altered for the better, then?"

"No, he still persists in looking upon you as the most incomprehensible and mysterious of beings."

"He is a charming young man," said Monte-Cristo, "and I felt a lively interest in him the very first evening of my introduction, when I met him in search of a supper, and prevailed upon him to accept a portion of mine. He is, I think, the son of General d'Epina?"

"He is."

"The same who was so shamefully assassinated in 1815?"

"By the Bonapartists."

"Yes! — really, I like him extremely; is there not also a matrimonial engagement contemplated for him?"

"Yes, he is to marry Mademoiselle de Villefort."

"Indeed!"

"And you know I am to marry Mademoiselle Danglars," said Albert, laughing.

"You smile?"

"Yes."

"Why do you do so?"

"I smile, because there appears to me to be about as much inclination for the consummation of the engagement in question as there is for my own. But really, my dear count, we are talking as much of women as they do of us; it is unpardonable!"

Albert rose.

"Are you going?"

"Really, that is a good idea of yours! — two hours have I been boring you to death with my company, and then you, with the greatest politeness, ask me if I am

going. Indeed, count, you are the most polished man in the world! And your servants, too, how very well behaved they are; there is quite a style about them. M. Baptistin especially; I could never get such a man as that. My servants seem to imitate those you sometimes see in a play, who, because they have only a word or two to say, acquit themselves in the most awkward manner possible. Therefore, if you part with M. Baptistin, give me the refusal of him."

"Agreed, viscount."

"That is not all; give my compliments to your illustrious visitor, Cavalcante of the Cavalcanti; and if by any chance he should be wishing to establish his son, find him a wife very rich, very noble, on her mother's side at least, and a baroness in right of her father, I will help you in the search."

"Oh! oh! you will do as much as that, will you?"

"Yes."

"Well, really, nothing is certain in this world."

"Oh! count, what a service you might render me! I should like you a hundred times better if, by your intervention, I could manage to remain a bachelor, even were it only for ten years."

"Nothing is impossible," gravely replied Monte-Cristo; and, taking leave of Albert, he returned into the house, and struck the gong three times.

Bertuccio appeared.

"M. Bertuccio, you understand that I intend entertaining company on Saturday at Auteuil."

Bertuccio slightly started.

"I shall require your services to see that all be properly arranged. It is a beautiful house, or, at all events, may be made so."

"There must be a good deal done before it can deserve that title, M. le comte, for the tapestried hangings are very old."

"Let them all be taken away and changed, then, with

the exception of the sleeping-chamber which is hung with red damask; you will leave that exactly as it is."

Bertuccio bowed.

"You will not touch the garden, either. As to the yard, you may do what you please with it; I should prefer that being altered beyond all recognition."

"I will do everything in my power to carry out your wishes, M. le comte. I should be glad, however, to receive your excellency's commands concerning the dinner."

"Really, my dear M. Bertuccio," said the count, "since you have been in Paris you have become quite nervous, and apparently out of your element; you no longer seem to understand me."

"But, surely, your excellency will be so good as to inform me whom you are expecting to receive?"

"I do not know myself, neither is it necessary that you should do so. 'Lucullus dines with Lucullus;' that is quite sufficient."

Bertuccio bowed, and left the room.

CHAPTER LV.

MAJOR CAVALCANTI.

BOTH the count and Baptistin had told the truth when they announced to Morcerf the proposed visit of the major, which had served Monte-Cristo as a pretext for declining the invitation which he had received from Albert.

Seven o'clock had just struck, and M. Bertuccio, according to the command which had been given him, had two hours before left for Auteuil, when a *fiacre* stopped at the door of the hotel, and after depositing its occupant at the gate, immediately hurried away, as if ashamed of its employment. The individual who alighted from the vehicle was about fifty-two years of age, dressed in one of those green surtouts, ornamented with black frogs, which have so long maintained their popularity all over Europe. He wore trousers of blue cloth, boots tolerably clean, but not of the brightest polish, and a little too thick in the soles, buckskin gloves, a hat somewhat resembling in shape those usually worn by the gendarmes, and a black cravat striped with white, which, if the proprietor had not worn it of his own free will, might have passed for a halter, so much did it resemble one. Such was the picturesque costume of the person who rung at the gate and demanded if it was not No. 30 in the Avenue des Champs Elysées that M. le Comte de Monte-Cristo inhabited, and who, being answered by the porter in the affirmative, entered, closed the gate after him, and began to ascend the steps of the house.

The small and angular head of the individual in ques-

tion, his white hair and thick gray moustache, caused him to be easily recognized by Baptistin, who had received an exact description of the expected visitor, and who was awaiting him in the hall. Therefore, scarcely had the stranger time to pronounce his name before the count was apprised of his arrival. He was ushered into a simple and elegant drawing-room, and the count rose to meet him with a smiling air.

"Ah, my dear sir, you are most welcome; I was expecting you."

"Indeed," said the Italian, "was your excellency then aware of my visit?"

"Yes, I had been told that I should see you to-day at seven o'clock."

"Then you have received full information concerning my arrival?"

"Decidedly."

"Ah, so much the better; I feared this little precaution might have been forgotten."

"What precaution?"

"That of informing you beforehand of my coming."

"Oh, no, it has not."

"But you are sure you are not mistaken?"

"I am *quite* sure of it."

"It really was I whom your excellency expected at seven o'clock this evening?"

"I will prove it to you beyond a doubt."

"Oh! no, never mind that," said the Italian; "it is not worth the trouble."

"Yes, yes," said Monte-Cristo.

His visitor appeared slightly uneasy.

"Let me see," said the count; "are you not M. le Marquis Bartolomeo Cavalcanti?"

"Bartolomeo Cavalcanti," joyfully replied the Italian; "yes, I am really he."

"Ex-major in the Austrian service?"

"Was I a major?" timidly asked the old soldier.

"Yes," said Monte-Cristo, "you were a major; that is the title the French give to the post which you filled in Italy."

"Very good," said the major; "I do not demand more; you understand ——"

"Your visit here to-day is not of your own suggestion, is it?" said Monte-Cristo.

"No; certainly not."

"You were sent by some other person?"

"Yes."

"By the excellent Abbé Busoni?"

"Exactly so," said the delighted major.

"And you have a letter?"

"Yes; there it is."

"Give it me, then;" and Monte-Cristo took the letter, which he opened and read.

The major looked at the count with his large, staring eyes, and then took a survey of the apartment, but his gaze almost immediately reverted to the proprietor of the room.

"Yes, yes, I see. 'Major Cavalcanti, a worthy patrician of Lucca, a descendant of the Cavalcanti of Florence,'" continued Monte-Cristo, reading aloud, "'possessing an income of half a million.'"

Monte-Cristo raised his eyes from the paper and bowed.

"Half a million," said he; "magnificent!"

"Half a million, is it?" said the major.

"Yes, in so many words; and it must be so, for the abbé knows correctly the amount of all the largest fortunes in Europe."

"Be it half a million, then; but, on my word of honor, I had no idea that it was so much."

"Because you are robbed by your steward; you must make some reformation in that quarter."

"You have opened my eyes," said the Italian, gravely. "I will show the gentleman the door."

Monte-Cristo resumed the perusal of the letter:

“‘And who only needs one thing more to make him happy.’”

“Yes, indeed! but one!” said the major, with a sigh.

“‘Which is to recover a lost and adored son.’”

“A lost and adored son!”

“‘Stolen away in his infancy, either by an enemy of his noble family or by the gipsies.’”

“At the age of five years, sir!” said the major, with a deep sigh, raising his eyes to heaven.

“Unhappy father!” said Monte-Cristo.

The count continued:

“‘I have given him renewed life and hope, in the assurance that you have the power of restoring the son whom he has vainly sought for fifteen years.’”

The major looked at the count with an indescribable expression of anxiety.

“I have the power of so doing,” said Monte-Cristo.

The major recovered his self-possession.

“Ah! ah!” said he, “the letter was true then to the end?”

“Did you doubt it, M. Bartolomeo?”

“No, indeed! certainly not; a good man, a man holding a religious office as does the Abbé Busoni, could not condescend to deceive or play off a joke; but your excellency has not read all.”

“Ah! True!” said Monte-Cristo, “there is a postscript.”

“Yes,” repeated the major, “yes — there — is — a postscript.”

“‘In order to save Major Cavalcanti the trouble of drawing on his banker, I send him a draft for 2,000 francs to defray his travelling expenses, and credit on you for the further sum of 48,000, which you still owe me.’”

The major awaited the conclusion of the postscript apparently with great anxiety.

“Very good,” said the count.

“He said ‘very good,’” muttered the major, “then — sir —” replied he.

"Then what?" asked Monte-Cristo.

"Then the postscript ——"

"Well! what of the postscript?"

"Then the postscript is as favorably received by you as the rest of the letter?"

"Certainly; the Abbé Busoni and myself have a small account open between us. I do not remember if it is exactly 48,000 francs, which I am still owing him; but I dare say we shall not dispute the difference. You attached great importance, then, to this postscript, my dear M. Cavalcanti?"

"I must explain to you," said the major, "that fully confiding in the signature of the Abbé Busoni, I had not provided myself with any other funds; so that if this resource had failed me, I should have found myself very unpleasantly situated in Paris."

"Is it possible that a man of your standing should be embarrassed anywhere?" said Monte-Cristo.

"Why, really, I know no one," said the major.

"But then, you yourself are known to others?"

"Yes, I am known; so that ——"

"Proceed, my dear M. Cavalcanti!"

"So that you will remit to me these 48,000 francs?"

"Certainly, at your first request."

The major's eyes dilated with pleasing astonishment.

"But sit down," said Monte-Cristo; "really, I do not know what I have been thinking of — I have positively kept you standing for the last quarter of an hour."

"Don't mention it." The major drew an armchair towards him, and proceeded to seat himself.

"Now," said the count, "what will you take? a glass of port, sherry, or vin d'Alicant?"

"Vin d'Alicant, if you please; it is my favorite wine."

"I have some which is excellent; you will take a biscuit with it, will you not?"

"Yes, I will take a biscuit, as you are so obliging."

Monte-Cristo rung; Baptistin appeared. The count advanced to meet him.

"Well?" said he, in a low voice.

"The young man is here," said the valet de chambre in the same tone.

"Into what room did you take him?"

"Into the blue drawing-room, according to your excellency's orders."

"That's right; now bring the vin d'Alicant and some biscuits."

Baptistin left the room.

"Really," said the major, "I am quite ashamed of the trouble I am giving you."

"Pray don't mention such a thing," said the count.

Baptistin re-entered with glasses, wine, and biscuits.

The count filled one glass, but in the other he only poured a few drops of the ruby-colored liquid. The bottle was covered with spider's webs, and all the other signs which indicate the age of wine more truly than do wrinkles on the face of a man.

The major made a wise choice: he took the full glass and a biscuit.

The count told Baptistin to leave the plate within reach of his guest, who began by sipping the Alicant with an expression of great satisfaction, and then delicately steeped his biscuit in the wine.

"So, sir, you inhabited Lucca, did you? you were rich, noble, held in great esteem, had all that could render a man happy?"

"All," said the major, hastily swallowing the biscuit, "positively all."

"And yet there was one thing wanting in order to complete your happiness?"

"Only one thing," said the Italian.

"And that one thing, your lost child!"

"Ah!" said the major, taking a second biscuit, "that consummation of my happiness was indeed wanting." The worthy major raised his eyes to heaven and sighed.

"Let me hear, then," said the count, "who this deeply

regretted son was? for I always understood you were a bachelor."

"That was the general opinion, sir," said the major, "and I ——"

"Yes," replied the count, "and you confirmed the report. A youthful indiscretion, I suppose, which you were anxious to conceal from the world at large?"

The major recovered himself, and resumed his usual calm manner; at the same time casting his eyes down, either to give himself time to compose his countenance, or to assist his imagination, all the while giving an underlook at the count, the protracted smile on whose lips announced the same polite curiosity.

"Yes," said the major, "I did wish this fault to be hidden from every eye."

"Not on your own account, surely," replied Monte-Cristo, "for a man is above all these things?"

"Oh, no, certainly not on my own account," said the major, with a smile and a shake of the head.

"But for the sake of the mother?" said the count.

"Yes, for the mother's sake — his poor mother!" cried the major, taking a third biscuit.

"Take some more wine, my dear Cavalcanti," said the count, pouring out for him a second glass of Alicant; "your emotion has quite overcome you."

"His poor mother!" murmured the major, trying if the will was powerful enough to act on the lachrymal gland, so as to moisten the corner of his eye with a false tear.

"She belonged to one of the first families in Italy, I think, did she not?"

"She was of a noble family of Fiesole, M. le comte."

"And her name was ——"

"Do you desire to know her name?"

"Oh!" said Monte-Cristo, "it would be quite superfluous for you to tell me, for I already know it."

"M. le comte knows everything," said the Italian, bowing.

"Oliva Corsinari, was it not?"

"Oliva Corsinari!"

"A marchioness?"

"A marchioness!"

"And you married her at last, notwithstanding the opposition of her family?"

"Yes, I did so."

"And you have doubtless brought all your papers with you?" said Monte-Cristo.

"What papers?"

"The certificate of your marriage with Oliva Corsinari, and the register of your child's birth?"

"The register of my child's birth?"

"The register of the birth of Andrea Cavalcanti — of your son; is not his name Andrea?"

"I believe so," said the major.

"What! you are not sure that is his name?"

"I dare not positively assert it, as he has been lost for so long a time."

"Well, then," said Monte-Cristo, "you have all the documents with you?"

"M. le comte, I regret to say that, not knowing it was necessary to come provided with these papers, I neglected to bring them with me."

"That is unfortunate," returned Monte-Cristo.

"Were they, then, so necessary?"

"They were indispensable."

The major passed his hand across his brow.

"Ah! *per Bacco*, indispensable, were they?"

"Certainly they were; supposing there were to be doubts raised as to the validity of your marriage or the legitimacy of your child?"

"True," said the major, "there may be doubts raised."

"In that case your son would be very unpleasantly situated."

"It would be fatal to his interests."

"It might cause him to fail in some desirable matrimonial speculation."

"*O peccato!*"

"You must know that in France they are very particular on these points; it is not sufficient, as in Italy, to go to the priest, and say, 'We love each other, and want you to marry us.' Marriage is a civil affair in France, and in order to marry in an orthodox manner, you must have papers which undeniably establish your identity."

"That is the misfortune! you see I have not these necessary papers."

"Fortunately I have them, though," said Monte-Cristo.

"You?"

"Yes."

"You have them?"

"I have them."

"Ah, indeed!" said the major, who, seeing the object of his journey frustrated by the absence of the papers, feared also that his forgetfulness might give rise to some difficulty concerning the 48,000 francs. "Ah, indeed, that is a fortunate circumstance. Yes, that really is lucky, for it never occurred to me to bring them."

"I do not at all wonder at it, one cannot think of everything; but happily the Abbé Busoni thought for you."

"He is an excellent person!"

"He is extremely prudent and thoughtful."

"He is an admirable man," said the major; "and he sent them to you?"

"Here they are."

The major clasped his hands in token of admiration.

"You married Oliva Corsinari, in the church of San Paolo del Monte-Cattini; here is the priest's certificate."

"Yes, indeed, there it is truly," said the Italian, looking on with astonishment.

"And here is Andrea Cavalcanti's baptismal register, given by the curé of Saravezza."

"All quite correct."

"Take these documents, then, they do not concern me;

you will give them to your son, who will of course take great care of them."

"I should think so, indeed! If he were to lose them ——"

"Well, and if he were to lose them?" said Monte-Cristo.

"In that case," replied the major, "it would be necessary to write to the curé for duplicates, and it would be some time before they could be obtained."

"It would be a difficult matter to arrange," said Monte-Cristo.

"Almost an impossibility," replied the major.

"I am very glad to see that you understand the value of these papers."

"I regard them as invaluable."

"Now," said Monte-Cristo, "as to the mother of the young man ——"

"As to the mother of the young man ——" repeated the Italian, with anxiety.

"As regards la Marquise Corsinari ——"

"Really," said the major, "difficulties seem to thicken upon us; will she be wanted in any way?"

"No, sir," replied Monte-Cristo, "besides, has she not ——"

"Yes, yes," said the major, "she has ——"

"Paid the last debt of nature?"

"Alas, yes!" returned the Italian.

"I knew that," said Monte-Cristo; "she has been dead these ten years."

"And I am still mourning her loss," exclaimed the major, drawing from his pocket a checked handkerchief, and alternately wiping first the right and then the left eye.

"What would you have?" said Monte-Cristo, "we are all mortal. Now, you understand, my dear M. Cavalcanti, that it is useless for you to tell people in France that you have been separated from your son for fifteen years.

Stories of gipsies, who steal children, are not at all in vogue in this part of the world, and would not be believed. You sent him for his education to a college in one of the provinces, and now you wish him to complete this education in the Parisian world. That is the reason which had induced you to leave Via Reggio, where you have lived since the death of your wife. That will be sufficient."

"You think so?"

"Certainly."

"Very well, then."

"If they should hear of the separation ——"

"Ah, yes! what could I say?"

"That an unfaithful tutor, bought over by the enemies of your family ——"

"By the Corsinari?"

"Precisely. Had stolen away this child in order that your name might become extinct."

"That will do well, since he is an only son."

"Well, now that all is arranged, do not let these newly awakened remembrances be forgotten; you have doubtless already guessed that I was preparing a surprise for you."

"An agreeable one?" asked the Italian.

"Ah! I see the eye of a father is no more to be deceived than his heart."

"Hum!" said the major.

"Some one has told you the secret, or, perhaps, you guessed that he was here."

"That who was here?"

"Your child — your son — your Andrea."

"I did guess it," replied the major, with the greatest *sang froid* possible; "then he is here?"

"He is," said Monte-Cristo; "when the valet de chambre came in just now he told me of his arrival."

"Ah, very well! very well!" said the major, clutching the buttons of his coat at each exclamation which he made.

"My dear sir," said Monte-Cristo, "I understand all your emotion: you must have time to recover yourself. I will, in the meantime, go and prepare the young man for this much-desired interview, for I presume that he is not less impatient for it than yourself."

"I should quite imagine that to be the case," said Cavalcanti.

"Well! in a quarter of an hour he shall be with you."

"You will bring him, then; you carry your goodness so far as even to present him to me yourself!"

"No, I do not wish to come between a father and son. Your interview will be private; but do not be uneasy, — even if the powerful voice of nature should be silent, you cannot well mistake him; he will enter by this door. He is a fine young man, of fair complexion, a little too fair perhaps, pleasing manners — but you will see and judge for yourself."

"By the way," said the major, "you know I have only the 2,000 francs which the Abbé Busoni sent me; this sum I have expended upon travelling expenses, and —"

"And you want money — that is a matter of course, my dear M. Cavalcanti. Well, here are 8,000 francs on account."

The major's eyes sparkled brilliantly.

"It is 40,000 francs which I now owe you," said Monte-Cristo.

"Does your excellency wish for a receipt?" said the major, at the same time slipping the money into the inner pocket of his coat.

"For what?" said the count.

"I thought you might want it to show the Abbé Busoni."

"Well, when you receive the remaining 40,000 you shall give me a receipt in full. Between honest men such excessive precaution is, I think, quite unnecessary."

"Yes, so it is between perfectly upright people."

"One word more," said Monte-Cristo.

"Say on."

"You will permit me to make one remark?"

"Certainly, pray do so."

"Then I should advise you to leave off wearing that style of dress."

"Indeed!" said the major, regarding himself with an air of complete satisfaction.

"Yes, it may be worn at Via Reggio; but that costume, however elegant in itself, has long been out of fashion in Paris."

"That's unfortunate."

"Oh, if you are really attached to your old mode of dress, you can easily resume it when you leave Paris."

"But what shall I wear?"

"What you find in your trunks."

"In my trunks? I have but one portmanteau."

"I dare say you have nothing else with you. What is the use of boring one's-self with so many things? besides, an old soldier always likes to march with as little baggage as possible."

"That is just the case, precisely so!"

"But you are a man of foresight and prudence, therefore you sent your baggage on before you. It has arrived at the Hôtel des Princes, Rue de Richelieu. It is there you are to take up your quarters."

"Then, in these trunks ——"

"I presume you have given orders to your valet de chambre to put in all you are likely to need — your plain clothes and your uniform. On grand occasions you must wear your uniform: that will look very well. Do not forget your crosses. They still laugh at them in France, and yet always wear them for all that."

"Very well! very well!" said the major, who was in ecstasy at the attention paid him by the count.

"Now," said Monte-Cristo, "that you have fortified yourself against all painful excitement, prepare yourself, my dear M. Cavalcanti, to meet your lost Andrea."

Saying which, Monte-Cristo bowed, and disappeared behind the tapestry, leaving the major fascinated beyond expression with the delightful reception which the count had given him.

CHAPTER LVI.

ANDREA CAVALCANTI.

THE Count of Monte-Cristo entered the adjoining room which Baptistin had designated as the blue drawing-room, and found there a young man of graceful demeanor and elegant appearance, who had arrived in a *fiacre* about half an hour previously.

Baptistin had not found any difficulty in recognizing the individual who presented himself at the door for admittance. He was certainly the tall young man with light hair, red beard, and black eyes, and brilliant complexion, whom his master had so particularly described to him.

When the count entered the room, the young man was carelessly stretched on a sofa, tapping his boot with the gold-headed cane which he held in his hand. On perceiving the count, he rose quickly.

"The Count of Monte-Cristo, I believe?" said he.

"Yes, sir, and I think I have the honor of addressing M. le Comte Andrea Cavalcanti?"

"Count Andrea Cavalcanti," repeated the young man, accompanying his words with a bow.

"You are charged with a letter of introduction addressed to me, are you not?" said the count.

"I did not mention that, because the signature seemed to me so strange."

"The letter is signed 'Sinbad the Sailor,' is it not?"

"Exactly so. Now, as I have never known any Sinbad, with the exception of the one celebrated in 'Thousand and One Nights' ——"

"Well! it is one of his descendants, and a great friend

of mine; he is a very rich Englishman, eccentric almost to insanity; and his real name is Lord Wilmore."

"Ah, indeed! then that explains everything," said Andrea; "that is extraordinary. He is, then, the same Englishman whom I met—at—yes, very well! M. le comte, I am at your service."

"If what you say be true," replied the count, smiling, "perhaps you will be kind enough to give me some account of yourself and your family?"

"Certainly, I will do so," said the young man, with a quickness which gave proof of his ready invention. "I am (as you have said) the Count Andrea Cavalcanti, son of Major Bartolomeo Cavalcanti, a descendant of the Cavalcanti whose names are inscribed in the golden book at Florence. Our family, although still rich (for my father's income amounts to half a million), has experienced many misfortunes, and I myself was, at the age of five years, taken away by the treachery of my tutor, so that for fifteen years I have not seen the author of my existence. Since I have arrived at years of discretion, and become my own master, I have been constantly seeking him, but all in vain. At length I received this letter from your friend, which states that my father is in Paris, and authorizes me to address myself to you for information respecting him."

"Really, all you have related to me is exceedingly interesting," said Monte-Cristo, observing the young man with a gloomy satisfaction; "and you have done well to conform in everything to the wishes of my friend Sinbad; for your father is indeed here, and is seeking you."

The count, from the moment of his first entering the drawing-room, had not once lost sight of the expression of the young man's countenance; he had admired the assurance of his look and the firmness of his voice; but at these words, so natural in themselves, "Your father is indeed here, and is seeking you," young Andrea started, and exclaimed:

"My father! — is my father here?"

"Most undoubtedly," replied Monte-Cristo; "your father, the Major Bartolomeo Cavalcanti."

The expression of terror which for the moment had overspread the features of the young man had now disappeared.

"Ah! yes, that is the name, certainly, Major Bartolomeo Cavalcanti. And you really mean to say, M. le comte, that my dear father is here?"

"Yes, sir, and I can even add that I have only just left his company. The history which he related to me of his lost son touched me to the quick; indeed, his griefs, hopes, and fears, on that subject, might furnish material for a most touching and pathetic poem. At length, he one day received a letter, stating that the parties who had deprived him of his son now offered to restore him, or at least to give notice where he might be found, on condition of receiving a large sum of money by way of ransom. Your father did not hesitate an instant, and the sum was sent to the frontier of Piedmont, with a passport signed for Italy. You were in the south of France, I think?"

"Yes," replied Andrea, with an embarrassed air, "I was in the south of France."

"A carriage was to await you at Nice?"

"Precisely so; and it conveyed me from Nice to Genoa, from Genoa to Turin, from Turin to Chambery, from Chambery to Pont de Beauvoisin, and from Pont de Beauvoisin to Paris."

"Indeed! then your father ought to have met you on the road, for it is exactly the same route which he himself took, and that is how we have been able to trace your journey to this place."

"But," said Andrea, "if my father had met me, I doubt if he would have recognized me; I must be somewhat altered since he last saw me."

"Oh! the voice of nature," said Monte-Cristo.

"True!" interrupted the young man, "I had not looked upon it in that point of view."

"Now," replied Monte-Cristo, "there is only one source of uneasiness left in your father's mind, which is this — he is anxious to know how you have been employed during your long absence from him; how you have been treated by your persecutors; and if they have conducted themselves towards you with all the deference due to your rank. Finally, he is anxious to see if you have been fortunate enough to escape the bad moral influence to which you have been exposed, and which is infinitely more to be dreaded than any physical suffering; he wishes to discover if the fine abilities with which nature had endowed you have been weakened by want of culture; in short, whether you consider yourself capable of resuming and retaining in the world the high position to which your rank entitles you."

"Sir," exclaimed the young man, quite astounded, "I hope no false report ——"

"As for myself, I first heard you spoken of by my friend Wilmore the philanthropist. I believe he found you in some unpleasant position, but do not know of what nature, for I did not ask, not being inquisitive. Your misfortunes engaged his sympathies; so you see you must have been interesting. He told me that he was anxious to restore you to the position which you had lost, and that he would seek your father until he had found him. He did seek, and has found him, apparently, since he is here now; and, finally, my friend apprised me of your coming, and gave me a few other instructions relative to your future fortune. I am quite aware that my friend Wilmore is an original, but he is sincere, and as rich as a gold mine, consequently he may indulge his eccentricities without any fear of their ruining him, and I have promised to adhere to his instructions. Now, sir, pray do not be offended at the question I am about to put to you, as it comes in the way of my duty as your patron. I would wish to know if the misfortunes which have happened to you — misfortunes entirely beyond your control, and which in no degree diminish my

regard for you — I would wish to know if they have not, in some measure, contributed to render you a stranger to the world in which your fortune and your name entitle you to make a conspicuous figure? ”

“Sir,” returned the young man, with a reassurance of manner, “make your mind easy on this score. Those who took me from my father, and who always intended, sooner or later, to sell me again to my original proprietor, as they have now done, calculated that, in order to make the most of their bargain, it would be politic to leave me in possession of all my personal and hereditary worth, and even to increase the value if possible. I have, therefore, received a very good education, and have been treated by these kidnappers very much as the slaves were treated in Asia Minor, whose masters made them grammarians, doctors, and philosophers, in order that they might fetch a higher price in the Roman market.”

Monte-Cristo smiled with satisfaction; it appeared as if he had not expected so much from M. Andrea Cavalcanti.

“Besides,” continued the young man, “if there did appear some defect in education, or offence against the established forms of etiquette, I suppose they would be excused in consideration of the misfortunes which accompanied my birth and followed me through my youth.”

“Well!” said Monte-Cristo, in an indifferent tone, “you will do as you please, count, for you are the master of your own actions, and are the person most concerned in the matter; but if I were you, I would not divulge a word of all these adventures. Your history is quite a romance, and the world, which delights in romances contained in two covers of yellow paper, strangely mistrusts those which are bound in living parchment, even though they be gilded like yourself. This is the kind of difficulty which I wished to represent to you, M. le comte. You would hardly have recited your touching history than it would go forth to the world, and be deemed unlikely and

unnatural. You would be no longer a lost child found, but you would be looked upon as an upstart, who had sprung up like a mushroom in the night. You might excite a little curiosity, but it is not every one who likes to be made the centre of observation, and the subject of unpleasant remark."

"I agree with you, M. le comte," said the young man, turning pale, and, in spite of himself, trembling beneath the scrutinizing look of his companion, "such consequences would be extremely unpleasant."

"Nevertheless you must not exaggerate the evil," said Monte-Cristo, "or by endeavoring to avoid one fault you will fall into another. You must resolve upon one simple and single line of conduct; and for a man of your intelligence, this plan is as easy as it is necessary; you must form honorable friendships, and by that means counteract the prejudice which may attach to the obscurity of your former life."

Andrea visibly changed countenance.

"I would offer myself as your surety and friendly adviser," said Monte-Cristo, "did I not possess a moral distrust of my best friends, and a sort of inclination to lead others to doubt them too; therefore, in departing from this rule, I should (as the actors say) be playing a part quite out of my line, and should therefore run the risk of being hissed, which would be an act of folly."

"However, M. le comte," said Andrea, "in consideration of Lord Wilmore, by whom I was recommended to you —"

"Yes, certainly," interrupted Monte-Cristo; "but Lord Wilmore did not omit to inform me, my dear M. Andrea, that the season of your youth was rather a stormy one. Ah!" said the count, watching Andrea's countenance, "I do not demand any confession from you; it is precisely to avoid that necessity that your father was sent for from Lucca. You shall soon see him; he is a little stiff and pompous in his manner, and he is disfigured by his uni-

form; but when it becomes known that he is in the Austrian service, all that will be pardoned. We are not generally very severe with the Austrians. In short, you will find your father a very presentable person, I assure you."

"Ah, sir, you have given me confidence; it is so long since we were separated, that I have not the least remembrance of him; and, besides, you know that in the eyes of the world a large fortune covers all defects."

"He is a millionaire — his income is 500,000 francs."

"Then," said the young man, with anxiety, "I shall be sure to be placed in an agreeable position?"

"One of the most agreeable possible, my dear sir; he will allow you an income of 50,000 livres per annum during the whole time of your stay in Paris."

"Then in that case I shall always choose to remain there."

"You cannot control circumstances, my dear sir: 'man proposes, but God disposes.'"

Andrea sighed.

"But," said he, "so long as I do remain in Paris and nothing forces me to quit it, do you mean to tell me that I may rely on receiving the sum you just now mentioned to me?"

"You may."

"Shall I receive it from my father?" asked Andrea, with some uneasiness.

"Yes, you will receive it from your father personally, but Lord Wilmore will be the security for the money; he has, at the request of your father, opened an account of 5,000 francs a month at M. Danglars's, which is one of the safest banks in Paris."

"And does my father mean to remain long in Paris?" asked Andrea.

"Only a few days," replied Monte-Cristo. "His service does not allow him to absent himself more than two or three weeks together."

"Ah! my dear father!" exclaimed Andrea, evidently charmed with the idea of his speedy departure.

"Therefore," said Monte-Cristo, feigning to mistake his meaning, — "therefore I will not for another instant retard the pleasure of your meeting. Are you prepared to embrace your worthy father?"

"I hope you do not doubt it."

"Go, then, into the drawing-room, my young friend, where you will find your father awaiting you."

Andrea made a low bow to the count, and entered the adjoining room.

Monte-Cristo watched him till he disappeared; he then touched a spring made to look like a picture, which, in sliding partly from the frame, discovered to view a small interstice, which was so cleverly contrived that it revealed all that was passing in the drawing-room now occupied by Cavalcanti and Andrea.

The young man closed the door behind him, and advanced towards the major, who had risen when he heard steps approaching him.

"Ah! my dear father!" said Andrea, in a loud voice, in order that the count might hear him in the next room, "is it really you?"

"How do you do, my dear son?" said the major, gravely.

"After so many years of painful separation," said Andrea, in the same tone of voice, and glancing towards the door, "what a happiness it is to meet again!"

"Indeed it is, after so long a separation."

"Will you not embrace me, sir?" said Andrea.

"If you wish it, my son," said the major, and the two men embraced each other after the fashion of actors on the stage; that is to say, each rested his head on the other's shoulder.

"Then we are once more reunited?" said Andrea.

"Once more!" replied the major.

"Never more to be separated?"

"Why, as to that — I think, my dear son, you must be

by this time so accustomed to France as to look upon it almost as a second country."

"The fact is," said the young man, "that I should be exceedingly grieved to leave it."

"As for me, you must know I cannot possibly live out of Lucca, therefore I shall return to Italy as soon as I can."

"But before you leave France, my dear father, I hope you will put me in possession of the documents which will be necessary to prove my descent."

"Certainly, I am come expressly on that account; it has cost me much trouble to find you, but I had resolved on giving them into your hands; and if I had to recommence my search, it would occupy all the few remaining years of my life."

"Where are these papers, then?"

"Here they are."

Andrea seized the certificate of his father's marriage and his own baptismal register, and after having opened them with all the eagerness which might be expected under the circumstances, he read them with a facility which proved that he was accustomed to similar documents, and with an expression which plainly denoted an unusual interest in the contents. When he had perused the documents, an indefinable expression of pleasure lighted up his countenance, and looking at the major with a most peculiar smile, he said, in very excellent Tuscan:

"Then there is no longer any such thing in Italy as being condemned to the galleys."

The major drew himself up to his full height.

"Why? — what do you mean by that question?"

"I mean that if there were, it would be impossible to draw up with impunity two such deeds as these. In France, my dear sir, half such a piece of effrontery as that would cause you to be quickly dispatched to Toulon for five years, for change of air."

"Will you be good enough to explain your meaning?"

said the major, endeavoring as much as possible to assume an air of the greatest majesty.

"My dear M. Cavalcanti," answered Andrea, taking the major by the arm in quite a confidential manner, "how much are you paid for being my father?"

The major was about to speak, when Andrea continued in a low voice:

"Nonsense! I am going to set you an example of confidence; they give me 50,000 francs a year to be your son; consequently you can understand that it is not at all likely that I shall ever deny my parent."

The major looked anxiously around him.

"Make yourself easy, we are quite alone," said Andrea; "besides, we are conversing in Italian."

"Well, then," replied the major, "they paid me 50,000 francs down."

"Monsieur Cavalcanti," said Andrea, "do you believe in fairy tales?"

"I used not to do so, but I really feel now almost obliged to have faith in them."

"You have then been induced to alter your opinion; you have had some proofs of their truth?"

The major drew forth from his pocket a handful of gold.

"Most palpable proofs," said he, "as you may perceive."

"You think, then, that I can rely on the count's promises?"

"Certainly I do."

"You are sure he will keep his word with me?"

"To the letter; but at the same time remember we must continue to play our respective parts. I, as a tender father——"

"And I as a dutiful son, as they choose that I shall be descended from you."

"Whom do you mean by they?"

"*Ma foi!* I can hardly tell, but I was alluding to those who wrote the letter; you received one, did you not?"

"Yes."

"From whom?"

"From a certain Abbé Busoni."

"Have you any knowledge of him?"

"No, I have never seen him."

"What did he say in the letter?"

"You will promise not to betray me?"

"Rest assured of that; you well know that our interests are the same."

"Then read for yourself;" and the major gave a letter into the young man's hand.

Andrea read in a low voice:

"You are poor; a miserable old age awaits you. Would you like to become rich, or at least independent? Set out immediately for Paris, and demand of the Count of Monte-Cristo, Avenue de Champs Elysées, No. 30, the son whom you had by the Marquise Corsinari, and who was taken from you at five years of age. This son is named Andrea Cavalcanti. In order that you may not doubt the kind intention of the writer of this letter, you will find enclosed an order for 24,000 francs, payable in Florence at the house of M. Gozzi, also a letter of introduction to M. le Comte de Monte-Cristo, on whom I give you a draft for 48,000 francs. Remember to go to the count on the 26th of May, at seven o'clock in the evening.

"(Signed) ABBÉ BUSONI."

"It is the same."

"What do you mean?" said the major.

"I was going to say that I received a letter almost to the same effect."

"You?"

"Yes."

"From the Abbé Busoni?"

"No."

"From whom, then?"

"From an Englishman, called Lord Wilmore, who takes the name of Sinbad the Sailor."

"And of whom you have no more knowledge than I of the Abbé Busoni?"

"You are mistaken! there I am in advance of you."

"You have seen him, then?"

"Yes, once."

"Where?"

"Ah! that is just what I cannot tell you; if I did, I should make you as wise as myself, which it is not my intention to do."

"And what did the letter contain?"

"Read it."

"You are poor, and your future prospects are dark and gloomy. Do you wish for a name? Should you like to be rich, and your own master?"

"*Ma foi!*" said the young man; "was it possible there could be two answers to such a question?"

"Take a post-chaise which you will find waiting at the Port de Genes, as you enter Nice; pass through Turin, Chambery, and Pont de Beauvoisin. Go to the Count of Monte-Cristo, Avenue des Champs Elysées, on the 26th of May, at seven o'clock in the evening, and demand of him your father. You are the son of the Marquis Cavalcanti and the Marquise Oliva Corsinari. The marquis will give you some papers which will certify this fact, and authorize you to appear under that name in the Parisian world. As to your rank, an annual income of fifty thousand livres will enable you to support it admirably. I enclose a draft for five thousand livres, payable on M. Ferrea, banker at Nice, and also a letter of introduction to the Count of Monte-Cristo, whom I have directed to supply all your wants.

"SINBAD THE SAILOR."

"Humph!" said the major — "very good! You have seen the count, you say?"

"I have only just left him."

"And has he conformed to all that the letter specified?"

"He has."

"Do you understand it?"

"Not in the least."

"There is a dupe somewhere."

"At all events, it is neither you nor I."

"Certainly not."

"Well, then —"

"Why, it does not much concern us; do you think it does?"

"No! I agree with you there; we must play the game to the end, and consent to be blindfold."

"Ah! you shall see. I promise you I will sustain my part to admiration."

"I never once doubted your doing so."

Monte-Cristo chose this moment for re-entering the drawing-room. On hearing the sound of his footsteps the two men threw themselves in each other's arms; and in the midst of the embrace, the count entered.

"Well, marquis," said Monte-Cristo, "you appear to be in no way disappointed in the son whom your good fortune has restored to you."

"Ah! M. le comte, I am overwhelmed with delight."

"And what are your feelings?" said Monte-Cristo, turning to the young man.

"As for me, my heart is overflowing with happiness."

"Happy father! happy son!" said the count.

"There is only one thing which grieves me," observed the major, "and that is the necessity there is for my leaving Paris so soon."

"Ah! my dear M. Cavalcanti, I trust you will not leave before I have had the honor of presenting you to some of my friends."

"I am at your service, sir," replied the major.

"Now, sir," said Monte-Cristo, addressing Andrea, "make your confession."

"To whom?"

"Tell M. Cavalcanti something of the state of your finances."

"*Ma foi!* M. le comte, you have touched upon a tender chord."

"Do you hear what he says, major?"

"Certainly I do."

"But do you understand?"

"I do."

"Your son says he requires money."

"Well, what would you have me do?" said the major.

"You should furnish him with some, of course," replied Monte-Cristo.

"I?"

"Yes, you!" said the count, at the same time advancing towards Andrea, and slipping a package of bank-notes into the young man's hand.

"What is this?"

"It is from your father."

"From my father?"

"Yes; did you not tell him just now that you wanted money? Well, then, he deposes me to give you this."

"Am I to consider this as part of my income on account?"

"No; it is for the first expenses of your settling in Paris."

"Ah! how good my dear father is!"

"Silence!" said Monte-Cristo; "he does not wish you to know that it comes from him."

"I fully appreciate his delicacy," said Andrea, cramming the notes hastily into his pocket.

"And now, gentlemen, I wish you good morning," said Monte-Cristo.

"And when shall we have the honor of seeing you again, M. le comte?" asked Cavalcanti.

"Ah!" said Andrea, "when may we hope for that pleasure?"

"On Saturday, if you will — yes. Let me see — Saturday — I am to dine at my country-house, at Auteuil, on that day, Rue la Fontaine, No. 28. Several persons are invited, and amongst others, M. Danglars, your banker. I will introduce you to him, for it will be necessary he should know you, as he is to pay your money."

"Full dress?" said the major, half aloud.

"Oh, yes, certainly," said the count — "uniform, cross, etc."

"And how shall I be dressed?" demanded Andrea.

"Oh! very simply: black trousers, polished boots, white waistcoat, either a black or blue coat, and a long cravat. Go to Blin or Veronique for your dress. Baptistin will tell you where they live, if you do not know where to address them. The less pretension there is in your dress the better will be the effect, as you are a rich man. If you mean to buy any horses, get them of Devedeux; and if you purchase a phaeton, go to Baptiste for it."

"At what hour shall we come?" asked the young man.

"About half-past six."

"We will be with you at that time," said the major.

The two Cavalcanti bowed to the count, and left the house.

Monte-Cristo went to the window, and saw them crossing the street, arm in arm.

"There go two miscreants!" said he. "It is a pity they are not really related!" then, after an instant of gloomy reflection, "Come, I will go to see the Morrels," said he; "I think that disgust is even more sickening than hatred."

CHAPTER LVII.

THE TRYSTING PLACE.

OUR readers must now allow us to transport them again to the enclosure surrounding M. de Villefort's house. Behind the gate, half screened from view by the large chestnut-trees, which on all sides spread their luxuriant branches, we shall find some persons of our acquaintance.

This time Maximilian was the first to arrive. He was intently watching for a shadow to appear amongst the trees, and awaiting with anxiety the sound of a light step on the gravel walk. At length a long-desired sound was heard, and instead of one figure, as he had expected, he perceived that two were approaching him.

The delay had been occasioned by a visit from Madame Danglars and Eugenie, which had been prolonged beyond the time at which Valentine was expected. That she might not appear to fail in her promise to Maximilian, she proposed to Mademoiselle Danglars that they should take a walk in the garden, being anxious to show that the delay, which was doubtless a cause of vexation to him, was not occasioned by any neglect on her part. The young man, with the intuitive perception of a lover, quickly understood the circumstances in which she was involuntarily placed, and was comforted. Besides, although she avoided coming within speaking distance, Valentine arranged so that Maximilian could see her pass and repass; and each time she did so, she managed, unperceived by her companion, to cast an expressive look at the young man, which seemed to say, "Have patience! You see it is not my fault."

And Maximilian was patient, and employed himself in mentally contrasting the two girls—one fair, with soft languishing eyes, a figure gracefully bending like a weeping willow; the other a brunette, with a fierce and haughty expression, and as upright as a poplar. It is unnecessary to state that, in the eyes of the young man, Valentine did not suffer by the contrast. In the space of about half an hour the ladies retired, and Maximilian understood that Mademoiselle Danglars's visit had at last come to a conclusion. In a few minutes Valentine re-entered the garden alone. For fear that any one should be observing her return, she walked slowly; and, instead of immediately directing her steps towards the gate, she seated herself on a bank, and carefully casting her eyes around to convince herself that she was not watched, she presently rose, and proceeded quickly to join Maximilian.

"Good evening, Valentine," said a well-known voice.

"Good evening, Maximilian; I know I have kept you waiting, but you saw the cause of my delay."

"Yes, I recognized Mademoiselle Danglars. I was not aware that you were so intimate with her."

"Who told you we were intimate, Maximilian?"

"No one, but you appeared to be so; from the manner in which you walked and talked together, one would have thought you were two schoolgirls telling your secrets to each other."

"We were having a confidential conversation," returned Valentine; "she was owning to me her repugnance to the marriage with M. de Morcerf; and I, on the other hand, was confessing to her how wretched it made me to think of marrying M. d'Epinay."

"Dear Valentine!"

"That will account to you for the unreserved manner which you observed between me and Eugenie; as in speaking of the man whom I could not love, my thoughts involuntarily reverted to him on whom my affections were fixed."

"Ah, how good you are to say so, Valentine! You possess a quality which can never belong to Mademoiselle Danglars! It is that indefinable charm which is to a woman what perfume is to the flower and flavor to the fruit; for the beauty of either is not the only quality we seek."

"It is your love which makes you look upon everything in that light."

"No, Valentine, I assure you such is not the case. I was observing you both when you were walking in the garden, and, on my honor, without at all wishing to depreciate the beauty of Mademoiselle Danglars, I cannot understand how any man can really love her."

"The fact is, Maximilian, that I was there, and my presence had the effect of rendering you unjust in your comparison."

"No; but tell me — it is a question of simple curiosity, and which was suggested by certain ideas passing in my mind relative to Mademoiselle Danglars —"

"I dare say it is something disparaging which you are going to say. It only proves how little indulgence we may expect from your sex," interrupted Valentine.

"You cannot, at least, deny that you are harsh judges of each other?"

"If we are so, it is because we generally judge under the influence of excitement. But return to your question."

"Does Mademoiselle Danglars object to this marriage with M. de Morcerf on account of loving another?"

"I told you I was not on strict terms of intimacy with Eugenie."

"Yes, but girls tell each other secrets without being particularly intimate: own, now, that you did question her on the subject. Ah! I see you are smiling."

"If you are already aware of the conversation that passed, the wooden partition which interposed between us and you has proved but a slight security."

"Come, what did she say?"

"She told me that she loved no one," said Valentine; "that she disliked the idea of being married; that she would infinitely prefer leading an independent and unfettered life; and that she almost wished her father might lose his fortune, that she might become an artist, like her friend, Mademoiselle Louise d'Armilly."

"Ah, you see ——"

"Well, what does that prove?" asked Valentine.

"Nothing," replied Maximilian.

"Then why do you smile?"

"Why, you yourself had your eyes fixed on me."

"Do you wish me to go?"

"Ah, no, no! But do not let us lose time; you are the subject on which I would wish to speak."

"True, we must be quick, for we have scarcely ten minutes more to pass together."

"*Ma foi!*" said Maximilian, in consternation.

"Yes, you are right; I am but a poor friend to you. What a life I cause you to lead, poor Maximilian, you who are so formed for happiness! I bitterly reproach myself, I assure you."

"Well, what does it signify, Valentine, so long as I am satisfied, and feel that even this long and painful suspense is amply repaid by five minutes of your society, or two words from your mouth? And I have also a deep conviction that Heaven would not have created two hearts harmonizing as ours do, and restored us to each other almost miraculously, at last to separate us."

"Thank you for your kind and cheering words. You must hope for us both, Maximilian, for I am almost incapable of realizing the feeling."

"But why must you leave me so soon?"

"I do not know particulars. I can only tell you that Madame de Villefort sent to request my presence, as she had a communication to make on which a part of my fortune depended. Let them take my fortune, I am already too rich; and perhaps, when they have taken it, they will

leave me in peace and quietness. You would love me as much if I were poor, would you not, Maximilian ? ”

“ Oh ! I shall always love you. What should I care for either riches or poverty if my Valentine were near me, and I felt certain that no one could deprive me of her ? But do you not fear that this communication may relate to your marriage ? ”

“ I do not think that is the case.”

“ However it may be, Valentine, I protest to you that I will never love another ! ”

“ And do you think it makes me happy to hear such a protestation ? ”

“ Pardon me, I did not mean to grieve you.”

“ But I was going to tell you that I met M. de Morcerf the other day.”

“ Well ? ”

“ Monsieur Franz is his friend, you know.”

“ What then ? ”

“ Monsieur de Morcerf has received a letter from Franz, announcing his immediate return.”

Valentine turned pale, and leaned against the gate for support.

“ Can it really be true, and is that why Madame de Villefort has sent for me ? No, that cannot be the case, for the communication would not be likely to come through her instrumentality.”

“ Why not ? ”

“ Because — I scarcely know why — but it has appeared as if Madame de Villefort secretly objected to the marriage, although she did not choose openly to oppose it.”

“ Is it so ? Then I feel as if I could adore Madame de Villefort.”

“ Do not be in such a hurry to do that,” said Valentine, with a sad smile.

“ If she objects to your marrying M. d’Epinay, she would be all the more likely to listen to any other proposition.”

"No, Maximilian, it is not suitors to which Madame de Villefort objects, it is marriage itself."

"Marriage! if she dislikes that so much, why did she ever marry, herself?"

"You do not understand me, Maximilian. About a year ago, I talked of retiring to a convent; Madame de Villefort, in spite of all the remarks which she considered it her duty to make, secretly approved of the proposition; my father consented to it at her instigation, and it was only on account of my poor grandfather that I finally abandoned the project. You can form no idea of the expression of that old man's eye when he looks at me, the only person in the world whom he loves, and, I had almost said, by whom he is beloved in return. When he learned my resolution, I shall never forget the reproachful look which he cast on me, and the tears of utter despair which chased each other down his lifeless cheeks. Ah! Maximilian, I experienced at that moment such remorse for my intention, that, throwing myself at his feet, I exclaimed, 'Forgive me, pray forgive me, my dear grandfather; they may do what they will with me, I will never leave you.' When I had ceased speaking, he thankfully raised his eyes to heaven, but without uttering a word. Ah, Maximilian! I may have much to suffer, but I feel as if my grandfather's look at that moment would more than compensate for all."

"Dear Valentine, you are a perfect angel; and I am sure I do not know what I can have done to merit your being revealed to me. But tell me what interest Madame de Villefort can have in your remaining unmarried?"

"Did I not tell you just now that I was rich, Maximilian — too rich? I possess nearly 50,000 livres in right of my mother; my grandfather and my grandmother, the Marquis and Marquise de St. Meran, will leave me as much more; and M. Noirtier evidently intends making me his heir. My brother Edward, who inherits nothing from his mother, will therefore be poor in comparison with me. Now, if I had taken the veil, all this fortune would

have descended to my father, and in reversion to his son."

"Ah! how strange it seems that such a young and beautiful woman should be so avaricious."

"It is not for herself that she is so, but for her son; and what you regard as a vice becomes almost a virtue when looked at in the light of maternal love."

"But could you not compromise matters, and give up a portion of your fortune to her son?"

"How could I make such a proposition, especially to a woman who always professes to be so entirely disinterested?"

"Valentine, I have always regarded our love in the light of something sacred, consequently I have covered it with the veil of respect, and hid it in the inmost recesses of my soul; no human being, not even my sister, is aware of its existence. Valentine, will you permit me to make a confidant of a friend, and reveal to him the love I bear you?"

Valentine started.

"A friend, Maximilian; and who is this friend? I tremble to give my permission."

"Listen, Valentine. Have you never experienced for any one that sudden and irresistible sympathy which made you feel as if the object of it had been your old and familiar friend, though, in reality, it was the first time you had ever met? Nay, further, have you never endeavored to recall the time, place, and circumstances of your former intercourse, and failing in this attempt, have almost believed that your spirits must have held converse with each other in some state of being anterior to the present, and that you are now occupied only in a reminiscence of the past?"

"Yes."

"Well! that is precisely the feeling which I experienced when I first saw that extraordinary man."

"Extraordinary, did you say?"

"Yes."

"You have known him for some time, then?"

"Scarcely longer than eight or ten days."

"And do you call a man your friend whom you have only known for eight or ten days? Ah! Maximilian, I had hoped you set a higher value on the title of a friend."

"Your logic is most powerful, Valentine, but say what you will, I can never renounce the sentiment which has instinctively taken possession of my mind; I feel as if it were ordained that this man should be associated with all the good which the future may have in store for me. And sometimes it really seems as if his eye were able to see what was to come, and his hand endowed with the power of directing events according to his own will."

"He must be a prophet, then," said Valentine, smiling.

"Indeed," said Maximilian, "I have often been tempted to attribute to him the gift of prophecy; at all events he has a wonderful power of foretelling any future good."

"Ah!" said Valentine, in a mournful tone, "do let me see this man, Maximilian; he may tell me whether I shall ever be loved sufficiently to make amends for all I have suffered."

"My poor girl! you know him already."

"I know him?"

"Yes; it was he who saved the life of your step-mother and her son."

"The Count of Monte-Cristo?"

"The same."

"Ah!" cried Valentine, "he is too much the friend of Madame de Villefort ever to be mine."

"The friend of Madame de Villefort! It cannot be; surely, Valentine, you are mistaken?"

"No, indeed, I am not, for I assure you his power over our household is almost unlimited. Courtied by my step-mother, who regards him as the epitome of human wisdom; admired by my father, who says he has never before heard such sublime ideas so eloquently expressed: idolized by

Edward, who, notwithstanding his fear of the count's large black eyes, runs to meet him the moment he arrives, and opens his hand, in which he is sure to find some delightful present—M. de Monte-Cristo appears to exert a mysterious and almost uncontrollable influence over all the members of our family."

"If such be the case, my dear Valentine, you must yourself have felt, or at all events will soon feel, the effects of his presence. He meets Albert de Morcerf in Italy—it is to rescue him from the hands of banditti; he introduces himself to Madame Danglars—it is that he may give her a royal present; your step-mother and her son pass before his door—it is that his Nubian may save them from destruction. This man evidently possesses the power of influencing events both as regards men and things. I never saw more simple tastes united to greater magnificence. His smile is so sweet when he addresses me, that I forget it can ever be bitter to others. Ah, Valentine! tell me if ever he looked on you with one of those sweet smiles! if so, depend on it, you will be happy."

"Me!" said the young girl, "he never even glances at me; on the contrary, if I accidentally cross his path, he appears rather to avoid me. Ah! he is not generous, neither does he possess that supernatural penetration which you attribute to him; for if he did, he would have perceived that I was unhappy; and if he had been generous, seeing me sad and solitary, he would have used his influence to my advantage; and since, as you say, he resembles the sun, he would have warmed my heart with one of his life-giving rays. You say he loves you, Maximilian; how do you know that he does? All would pay deference to an officer like you, with a fierce moustache and a long sabre; but they think they may crush a poor weeping girl with impunity."

"Ah! Valentine, I assure you, you are mistaken."

"If it were otherwise, if he treated me diplomatically,

that is to say, like a man who wishes, by some means or other, to obtain a footing in the house, so that he may ultimately gain the power of dictating to its occupants, he would, if it had been but once, have honored me with the smile which you extol so loudly; but no, he saw that I was unhappy, he understood that I could be of no use to him, and therefore paid me no regard whatever. Who knows but that, in order to please Madame de Villefort and my father, he may not persecute me by every means in his power! It is not just that he should despise me thus without any reason for so doing. Ah! forgive me," said Valentine, perceiving the effect which her words were producing on Maximilian; "I have done wrong, for I have given utterance to thoughts concerning that man which I did not even know existed in my heart. I do not deny the influence of which you speak, or that I have myself experienced it, but with me it has been productive of evil rather than good."

"Well, Valentine," said Morrel, with a sigh, "we will not discuss the matter further; I will not make a confidant of him."

"Alas!" said Valentine, "I see that I have given you pain. I can only say how sincerely I ask pardon for having grieved you. But, indeed, I am not prejudiced beyond the power of conviction; tell me, what has this Count of Monte-Cristo done for you?"

"I own that your question embarrasses me, Valentine, for I cannot say that the count has rendered me any ostensible service. Still, as I have already told you, I have an instinctive affection for him, the source of which I cannot explain to you. Has the sun done anything for me? No; he warms me with his rays, and it is by his light that I see you—nothing more. Has such and such a perfume done anything for me? No; its odor charms one of my senses; that is all I can say when I am asked why I praise it. My friendship for him is as strange and unaccountable as his for me. A secret voice seems to whisper to me that

there must be something more than chance in this unexpected reciprocity of friendship. In his most simple actions, as well as in his most secret thoughts, I find a relation to my own. You will, perhaps, smile at me when I tell you that ever since I have known this man, I have involuntarily entertained the idea that all the good fortune which has befallen me originated from him. However, I have managed to live thirty years without this protection, you will say; but I will endeavor a little to illustrate my meaning. He invited me to dine with him on Saturday, which was a very natural thing for him to do. Well! what have I learned since? That your mother and M. de Villefort are both coming to this dinner. I shall meet them there, and who knows what future advantages may result from the interview! This may appear to you to be no unusual combination of circumstances; nevertheless, I perceive some hidden plot in the arrangement, something, in fact, more than is apparent on a casual view of the subject. I believe that this singular man, who appears to fathom the motives of every one, has purposely arranged for me to meet M. and Madame de Villefort; and sometimes, I confess, I have gone so far as to try to read in his eyes whether he was in possession of the secret of our love."

"My good friend," said Valentine, "I should take you for a visionary and should tremble for your reason, if I were always to hear you talk in a strain similar to this. Is it possible that you can see anything more than the merest chance in this meeting? Pray reflect a little. My father, who never goes out, has several times been on the point of refusing this invitation; Madame de Villefort, on the contrary, is burning with the desire of seeing this extraordinary nabob in his own house, therefore she has, with great difficulty, prevailed on my father to accompany her. No, no! it is as I have said, Maximilian; there is no one in the world of whom I can ask help but yourself, and my grandfather, who is little better than a corpse."

"I see that you are right, logically speaking," said Maximilian; "but the gentle voice which usually has such power over me fails to convince me to-day."

"I feel the same as regards yourself," said Valentine; "and I own, that if you have no stronger proof to give me ——"

"I have another," replied Maximilian; "but I fear you will deem it even more absurd than the first."

"So much the worse," said Valentine, smiling.

"It is, nevertheless, conclusive to my mind; my ten years of service have also confirmed my ideas on the subject of sudden inspirations, for I have several times owed my life to one of those mysterious impulses which directed me to move at once either to the right or to the left, in order to escape the ball which killed the comrade fighting by my side, whilst it left me unharmed."

"Dear Maximilian, why not attribute your escape to my constant prayers for your safety? When you are away, I no longer pray for myself, but for you."

"Yes, since you have known me," said Morrel, smiling; "but that cannot apply to the time previous to our acquaintance, Valentine."

"You are very provoking, and will not give me credit for anything; but let me hear this second example, which you yourself own to be absurd."

"Well, look through this opening, and you will see the beautiful new horse which I rode here."

"Ah! what a beautiful creature!" cried Valentine; "why did you not bring it close to the gate, that I might talk to it and pat it?"

"It is, as you say, a very valuable animal," said Maximilian; "you know that my means are limited, and that I am what would be designated a man of moderate pretensions. Well; I went to a horse dealer's where I saw this magnificent horse, which I have named Medea; I asked the price of it; they told me it was 4,500 francs; I was, therefore, obliged to give it up, as you may imagine,

but I own I went away with rather a heavy heart, for the horse had looked at me affectionately, had rubbed its head against me, and when I mounted it, had pranced in the most coquettish way imaginable, so that I was altogether fascinated with it. The same evening some friends of mine visited me, M. de Château-Renaud, M. Debray, and five or six other choice spirits, whom you do not know even by name. They proposed *la bouillotte*; I never play, for I am not rich enough to afford to lose, nor sufficiently poor to desire to gain. But I was at my own house, you understand, so there was nothing to be done but to send for the cards, which I did. Just as they were sitting down to table M. de Monte-Cristo arrived. He took his seat amongst them, they played, and I won; I am almost ashamed to say that my gains amounted to 5,000 francs. We separated at midnight. I could not defer my pleasure, so I took a cabriolet and drove to the horse dealer's. Feverish and excited, I rang at the door; the person who opened it must have taken me for a madman, for I rushed at once to the stable. Medea was standing at the rack eating her hay. I immediately put on the saddle and bridle, to which operation she lent herself with the best grace possible; then, putting 4,500 francs into the hands of the astonished dealer, I proceeded to fulfil my intention of passing the night in riding in the Champs Elysées. As I rode by the count's house, I perceived a light in one of the windows, and fancied I saw the shadow of his figure moving behind the curtain. Now, Valentine, I firmly believe that he knew of my wish to possess that horse, and that he lost expressly to give me the means of procuring it."

"My dear Maximilian, you are really too fanciful; you will not love even me long. A man who accustoms himself to live in such a world of poetry and imagination must find far too little excitement in a common, every-day sort of attachment such as ours. But they are calling me. Do you hear?"

"Ah, Valentine!" said Maximilian, "give me but one finger through this opening in the grating, that I may have the happiness of kissing it."

"Maximilian, we said we would be to each other as two voices — two shadows."

"As you will, Valentine."

"Shall you be happy, if I do what you wish?"

"Oh! yes."

Valentine mounted the bank and passed not only her finger but her whole hand through the opening. Maximilian uttered a cry of delight, and, springing forward, seized the hand extended towards him, and imprinted on it a fervent and impassioned kiss. The little hand was then immediately withdrawn, and the young man saw Valentine hurrying towards the house, as though she were almost terrified at her own sensations.

CHAPTER LVIII.

M. NOIRTIER DE VILLEFORT.

WE will now relate what was passing in the house of the procureur du roi after the departure of Madame Danglars and her daughter, and during the time of the conversation between Maximilian and Valentine, which we have just detailed.

M. de Villefort entered his father's room, followed by Madame de Villefort. Both of the visitors, after saluting the old man and speaking to Barrois, a faithful servant, who had been twenty-five years in his service, took their places on either side of the paralytic.

M. Noirtier was sitting in an armchair, which moved upon casters, in which he was wheeled into the room in the morning, and in the same way was drawn out again at night. He was placed before a large glass, which reflected the whole apartment, and permitted him to see, without any attempt to move, which would have been impossible, all who entered the room and everything which was going on around him. M. Noirtier, although almost as immovable and helpless as a corpse, looked at the newcomers with a quick and intelligent expression, perceiving at once, by their ceremonious courtesy, that they were come on business of an unexpected and official character. Sight and hearing were the only senses remaining, and they appeared left, like two solitary sparks, to animate the miserable body, which seemed fit for nothing but the grave; it was only, however, by means of one of these senses that he could reveal the thoughts and feelings which still worked in his mind, and the look by which he

gave expression to this inner life resembled one of those distant lights which are sometimes seen in perspective by the benighted traveller whilst crossing some cheerless desert, apprising him that there is still one human being who, like himself, is keeping watch amidst the silence and obscurity of night. Noirtier's hair was long and white, and flowed over his shoulders; whilst in his eyes, shaded by thick, black lashes, were concentrated, as it often happens with any organ which is used to the exclusion of the others, all the activity, address, force, and intelligence which were formerly diffused over his whole body; certainly, the movement of the arm, the sound of the voice, and the agility of the body were wanting, but the speaking eye sufficed for all. He commanded with it; it was the medium through which his thanks were conveyed. In short, his whole appearance produced on the mind the impression of a corpse with living eyes, and nothing could be more startling than to observe the expression of anger or joy suddenly lighting up these organs, while the rest of the rigid and marble-like features were utterly deprived of the power of participation. Three persons only could understand the language of the poor paralytic; these were Villefort, Valentine, and the old servant, of whom we have already spoken. But as Villefort saw his father but seldom, and then only when absolutely obliged; and as he never took any pains to please or gratify him when he was there, all the old man's happiness was centred in his granddaughter Valentine, who by means of her love, her patience, and her devotion had learned to read in Noirtier's look all the varied feelings which were passing in his mind. To this dumb language, which was so unintelligible to others, she answered by throwing her whole soul into the expression of the countenance, and in this manner were the conversations sustained between the blooming girl and the helpless invalid, whose body could scarcely be called a living one, but who, nevertheless, possessed a fund of knowledge and penetration, united with a will as power-

ful as ever, although clogged by a body rendered utterly incapable of obeying its impulses. Valentine had resolved this strange problem, and was able easily to understand his thoughts, and to convey her own in return; and by her untiring and devoted assiduity, it was seldom that, in the ordinary transactions of every-day life, she failed to anticipate the wishes of the living, thinking mind, or the wants of the almost inanimate body. As to the servant, he had, as we have said, been with his master for five and twenty years, therefore he knew all his habits, and it was seldom that Noirtier found it necessary to ask for anything, so prompt was he in administering to all the necessities of the invalid. Villefort did not need the help of either Valentine or the domestic in order to carry on with his father the strange conversation which he was about to begin. As we have said, he perfectly understood the old man's vocabulary, and if he did not use it more often, it was only indifference and *ennui* which prevented him from so doing; he therefore allowed Valentine to go into the garden, sent away Barrois, and after having taken a place on the right hand of his father, whilst Madame de Villefort seated herself on the left, he addressed him thus:

"I trust you will not be displeased, sir, that Valentine has not come with us, or that I dismissed Barrois, for our conference will be one which could not with propriety be carried on in the presence of either. Madame de Villefort and I have a communication to make to you."

Noirtier's face remained perfectly passive during this long preamble; whilst, on the contrary, the eye of Villefort was endeavoring to penetrate into the inmost recesses of the old man's heart.

"This communication," continued the procureur du roi, in that cold and decisive tone which seemed at once to preclude all discussion, "will, we are sure, meet with your approbation."

The eye of the invalid still retained that vacancy of expression which prevented his son from obtaining any

knowledge of the feelings which were passing in his mind; he listened, nothing more.

"Sir," resumed Villefort, "we are thinking of marrying Valentine."

Had the old man's face been moulded in wax, it could not have shown less emotion at this news than was now to be traced there.

"The marriage will take place in less than three months," said Villefort.

Noirtier's eye still retained its inanimate expression.

Madame de Villefort now took her part in the conversation, and added:

"We thought this news would possess an interest for you, sir, who have always entertained a great affection for Valentine; it therefore only now remains for us to tell you the name of the young man for whom she is destined. It is one of the most desirable connections which could possibly be formed; he possesses fortune, a high rank in society, and every personal qualification likely to render Valentine supremely happy; his name, however, cannot be wholly unknown to you. The person to whom we allude is M. Franz de Quesnel, Baron d'Epinay."

During the time that his wife was speaking, Villefort had narrowly watched the countenance of the old man. When Madame de Villefort pronounced the name of Franz the pupil of M. Noirtier's eye began to dilate and his eyelids trembled with the same movement as may be perceived on the lips of an individual about to speak, and he darted a lightning glance at Madame de Villefort and his son. The procureur du roi, who knew the political hatred which had formerly existed between M. Noirtier and the elder D'Epinay, well understood the agitation and anger which the announcement had produced; but, deigning not to perceive either, he immediately resumed the conversation which had been commenced by his wife.

"Sir," said he, "you are aware that Valentine is about

to enter her nineteenth year, which renders it important that she should lose no time in forming a suitable connection. Nevertheless, you have not been forgotten in our plans, and we have fully ascertained beforehand that Valentine's future husband will consent, not to live in this house, for that might not be pleasant for the young people, but that you should live with them; so that you and Valentine, who are so attached to each other, would not be separated, and you would be able to pursue exactly the same course of life which you have hitherto done, and thus, instead of losing, you will be a gainer by the change, as it will secure to you two children instead of one, to watch over and comfort you."

Noirtier's look was furious; it was very evident that something desperate was passing in the old man's mind, for the cry of anger and grief rose to his throat, and not being able to find vent in utterance, appeared almost to choke him, for his face and lips turned quite purple with the struggle.

Villefort quietly opened a window, saying, "It is very warm, and the heat affects M. Noirtier." He then returned to his place, but did not sit down.

"This marriage," added Madame de Villefort, "is quite agreeable to the wishes of M. d'Epinay and his family; besides, he had no relations nearer than an uncle and aunt, his mother having died at his birth, and his father having been assassinated in 1815, that is to say, when Franz was but two years old; it naturally followed that the child was permitted to choose his own pursuits, and he has therefore seldom acknowledged any other authority but that of his own will."

"That assassination was a mysterious affair," said Villefort, "and the perpetrators have hitherto escaped detection, although suspicion has fallen on the head of more than one person."

Noirtier made such an effort that his lips expanded into a smile.

"Now," continued Villefort, "those to whom the guilt really belongs, by whom the crime was committed, on whose heads the justice of man may probably descend here, and the certain judgment of God hereafter, would rejoice in the opportunity thus afforded of bestowing such a peace-offering as Valentine on the son of him whose life they so ruthlessly destroyed."

Noirtier had succeeded in mastering his emotion more than could have been deemed possible with such an enfeebled and shattered frame. "Yes, I understand!" was the reply contained in his look, and this look expressed a feeling of strong indignation mixed with profound contempt.

Villefort fully understood his father's meaning, and answered by a slight shrug of the shoulders. He then motioned to his wife to take leave.

"Now, sir," said Madame de Villefort, "I must bid you farewell. Would you like me to send Edward to you for a short time?"

It had been agreed that the old man should express his approbation by closing his eyes, his refusal by winking them several times, and if he had some desire or feeling to express, he raised them to heaven. If he wanted Valentine, he closed the right eye only, and if Barrois, the left.

At Madame de Villefort's proposition he instantly winked his eyes. Provoked by a complete refusal, she bit her lip, and said, "Then, shall I send Valentine to you?"

The old man closed his eyes eagerly, thereby intimating that such was his wish.

M. and Madame de Villefort bowed and left the room, giving orders that Valentine should be summoned to her grandfather's presence, and feeling sure that she would have much to do to restore calmness to the perturbed spirit of the invalid.

Valentine, with a color still heightened by emotion, entered the room just after her parents had quitted it. One look was sufficient to tell her that her grandfather

was suffering, and that there was much on his mind which he desired to communicate to her.

"Dear grandpapa," cried she, "what has happened? They have vexed you, and you are angry?"

The paralytic closed his eyes, in token of assent.

"Who has displeased you? Is it my father?"

"No."

"Madame de Villefort?"

"No."

"Me?"

The former sign was repeated.

"Are you displeased with me?" cried Valentine, in astonishment.

M. Noirtier again closed his eyes.

"And what have I done, dear grandpapa, that you should be angry with me?" cried Valentine.

There was no answer, and she continued, "I have not seen you all day. Has any one been speaking to you against me?"

"Yes," said the old man's look, with eagerness.

"Let me think a moment—I do assure you, grandpapa—ah!—M. and Madame de Villefort have just left the room. Have they not?"

"Yes."

"And it was they who told you something which made you angry? What was it, then? May I go and ask them, that I may have the opportunity of making my peace with you?"

"No! no!" said Noirtier's look.

"Ah! you frighten me. What can they have said?" and she again tried to think what it could be.

"Ah! I know," said she, lowering her voice, and going close to the old man, "they have been speaking of my marriage—have they not?"

"Yes," replied the angry look.

"I understand; you are displeased at the silence I have preserved on the subject. The reason of it was, that they

had insisted on my keeping the matter a secret, and begged me not to tell you anything of it; they did not even acquaint me with their intentions, and I only discovered them by chance; that is why I have been so reserved with you, dear grandpapa. Pray forgive me!"

But there was no look calculated to reassure her; all it seemed to say was, "It is not only your reserve which afflicts me."

"What is it, then?" asked the young girl. "Perhaps you think I shall abandon you, dear grandpapa, and that I shall forget you when I am married?"

"No."

"They told you, then, that M. d'Epinay consented to our all living together?"

"Yes."

"Then why are you still vexed and grieved?"

The old man's eyes beamed with an expression of gentle affection.

"Yes, I understand," said Valentine, "it is because you love me."

The old man assented.

"And you are afraid I shall be unhappy?"

"Yes."

"You do not like M. Franz?"

The eyes repeated several times, "No, no, no."

"Then you are vexed at the engagement?"

"Yes."

"Well, listen," said Valentine, throwing herself on her knees, and putting her arm around her grandfather's neck, "I am vexed, too, for I do not love M. Franz d'Epinay."

An expression of intense joy illumined the old man's eyes.

"When I wished to retire into a convent, you remember how angry you were with me?"

A tear trembled in the eye of the invalid.

"Well," continued Valentine, "the reason of my proposing it was that I might escape this hateful marriage, which drives me to despair."

Noirtier's breathing became thick and short.

"Then the idea of this marriage really grieves you, too. Ah! if you could but help me; if we could both together defeat their plan! But you are unable to oppose them. You, whose mind is so quick, and whose will is so firm, are nevertheless as weak and unequal to the contest as I am myself. Alas! you, who would have been such a powerful protector to me in the days of your health and strength, can now only sympathize in my joys and sorrows, without being able to take any active part in them. However, this is much, and calls for gratitude, and Heaven has not taken away all my blessings when it leaves me your sympathy and kindness."

At these words there appeared in Noirtier's eyes an expression of such deep meaning, that the young girl thought she could read these words there: "You are mistaken; I can still do much for you."

"Do you think you can help me, dear grandpapa?" said Valentine.

"Yes." Noirtier raised his eyes; it was the sign agreed on between him and Valentine when he wanted anything.

"What is it you want, dear grandpapa?" said Valentine, and she endeavored to recall to mind all the things which he would be likely to need; and as the ideas presented themselves her to mind, she repeated them aloud; but finding that all her efforts elicited nothing but a constant, "No," "Come," said she, "since this plan does not answer, I will have recourse to another." She then recited all the letters of the alphabet from A down to N. When she arrived at that letter, the paralytic made her understand that was the initial letter of the thing which he wanted.

"Ah!" said Valentine, "the thing you desire begins with the letter N; it is with N that we have to do then. Well, let me see, what can you want which begins with N? Na—, Ne—, Ni—, No—"

"Yes, yes, yes," said the old man's eye.

"Ah! it is No, then?"

"Yes."

Valentine fetched a dictionary, which she placed on a desk before Noirtier; she opened it, and seeing that the old man's eye was thoroughly fixed on its pages, she ran her finger quickly up and down the columns. During the six years which had passed since Noirtier first fell into this sad state, Valentine's powers of invention had been too often put to the test not to render her expert in devising expedients of gaining a knowledge of his wishes, and the constant practice had so perfected her in the art that she guessed the old man's meaning as quickly as if he himself had been able to seek for what he wanted. At the word *Notary*, Noirtier made a sign to her to stop.

"Notary," said she, "do you want a notary, dear grandpapa?"

The old man again signified that it was a notary he desired.

"You would wish a notary to be sent for, then?" said Valentine.

"Yes."

"Shall my father be informed of your wish?"

"Yes."

"Then they shall go for him directly, dear grandpapa. Is that all you want?"

"Yes."

Valentine rang the bell, and ordered the servant to tell Monsieur and Madame de Villefort that they were requested to come to M. Noirtier's room.

"Are you satisfied now?" inquired Valentine.

"Yes."

"I am sure you are; it is not very difficult to discover that;" and the young girl smiled on her grandfather, as if he had been a child.

M. de Villefort entered, followed by Barrois.

"What do you want me for, sir?" demanded he of the paralytic.

"Sir," said Valentine, "my grandfather wishes for a notary."

At this strange and unexpected demand, M. de Villefort and his father exchanged looks.

"Yes," motioned the latter, with a firmness which seemed to declare that, with the help of Valentine and his old servant, who both knew what his wishes were, he was quite prepared to maintain the contest.

"Do you wish for a notary?" asked Villefort.

"Yes."

"What to do?"

Noirtier made no answer.

"What do you want with a notary?" again repeated Villefort.

The invalid's eye remained fixed, by which expression he intended to intimate that his resolution was unalterable.

"Is it to do us some ill turn; do you think it worth while?" said Villefort.

"Still," said Barrois, with the freedom and fidelity of an old servant, "if M. Noirtier asks for a notary, I suppose he really wishes for a notary; therefore I shall go at once and fetch one." Barrois acknowledged no master but Noirtier, and never allowed his desires in any way to be contradicted.

"Yes, I do want a notary," motioned the old man, shutting his eyes with a look of defiance, which seemed to say, "and I should like to see the person who dares to refuse my request."

"You shall have a notary, as you absolutely wish for one, sir," said Villefort; "but I shall explain to him your state of health, and make excuses for you, for the scene cannot fail of being a most ridiculous one."

"Never mind that," said Barrois, "I shall go and fetch a notary, nevertheless;" and the old servant departed triumphantly on his mission.

CHAPTER LIX.

THE WILL.

As soon as Barrois had left the room, Noirtier looked at Valentine with that peculiar expression which conveyed so much deep meaning. The young girl perfectly understood the look, and so did Villefort, for his countenance became clouded, and he knitted his eyebrows angrily. He took a seat and quietly awaited the arrival of the notary.

Noirtier saw him seat himself with an appearance of perfect indifference, at the same time giving a side look at Valentine, which made her understand that she also was to remain in the room. Three quarters of an hour after Barrois returned, bringing the notary with him.

"Sir," said Villefort, after the first salutations were over, "you were sent for by M. Noirtier, whom you see here. All his limbs have become completely paralyzed; he has almost entirely lost his voice, and we ourselves find considerable trouble in endeavoring to catch some fragments of his meaning."

Noirtier cast an appealing look on Valentine, which look was at once so earnest and imperative, that she answered immediately:

"Sir," said she, "I perfectly understand my grandfather's meaning at all times."

"That is quite true," said Barrois; "and that is what I told the gentleman as we walked along."

"Permit me," said the notary, turning first to Villefort and then to Valentine, "permit me to state that the case in question is just one of those in which a public officer

like myself cannot proceed to act without thereby incurring a dangerous responsibility. The first thing necessary to render an act valid is, that the notary should be thoroughly convinced that he has faithfully interpreted the will and wishes of the person dictating the act. Now, I cannot be sure of the approbation or disappointment of a client who cannot speak; and as the object of his desire or his repugnance cannot be clearly proved to me, on account of his want of speech, my services here would be quite useless, and cannot be legally exercised."

The notary then prepared to retire. An imperceptible smile of triumph was expressed on the lips of the procureur du roi.

Noirtier looked at Valentine with an expression so full of grief, that she arrested the departure of the notary.

"Sir," said she, "the language which I speak with my grandfather may be easily learned; and I can teach you in a few minutes to understand it almost as well as I can myself. Will you tell me what you require, in order to set your conscience quite at ease on the subject."

"In order to render an act valid, I must be certain of the approbation or disapprobation of my client. Illness of the body would not affect the validity of the deed; but sanity of mind is absolutely requisite."

"Well, sir, by the help of two signs, with which I will acquaint you presently, you may ascertain with perfect certainty that my grandfather is still in the full possession of all his mental faculties. M. Noirtier, being deprived of voice and motion, is accustomed to convey his meaning by closing his eyes when he wishes to signify 'yes,' and to wink when he means 'no.' You now know quite enough to enable you to converse with M. Noirtier; try."

Noirtier gave Valentine such a look of tenderness and gratitude, that it was comprehended even by the notary himself.

"You have heard and understood what your grand-

daughter has been saying, sir, have you?" asked the notary.

Noirtier closed his eyes.

"And you approve of what she said; that is to say, you declare that the signs which she mentioned are really those by means of which you are accustomed to convey your thoughts?"

"Yes."

"It was you who sent for me?"

"Yes."

"To make your will?"

"Yes."

"And you do not wish me to go away without fulfilling your original intentions?"

The old man winked violently.

"Well, sir," said the girl, "do you understand now, and is your conscience perfectly at rest on the subject?"

But before the notary could answer, Villefort had drawn him aside.

"Sir," said he, "do you suppose for a moment that a man can sustain a physical shock such as M. Noirtier has received, without any detriment to his mental faculties?"

"It's not exactly that," said the notary, "which makes me uneasy, but the difficulty will be in arriving at his thoughts and intentions, so as to be able to provoke his answers."

"You must see that to be an utter impossibility," said Villefort.

Valentine and the old man heard the conversation; and Noirtier fixed his eye so earnestly on Valentine, that she felt bound to answer to the look.

"Sir," said she, "that need not make you uneasy, however difficult it may at first sight appear to be. I can discover and explain to you my grandfather's thoughts, so as to put an end to all your doubts and fears on the subject. I have now been six years with M. Noirtier, and let him tell you if ever once, during that time, he has entertained

a thought which he was unable to make me understand."

"No," signed the old man.

"Let us try what we can do then," said the notary.

"You accept this young lady as your interpreter, M. Noirtier?"

"Yes."

"Well, sir, what do you require of me and what document is it that you wish to be drawn up?"

Valentine named all the letters of the alphabet till she came to W. At this letter the eloquent eye of Noirtier gave her notice that she was to stop.

"It is very evident that it is the letter W which M. Noirtier wants," said the notary.

"Wait," said Valentine; and, turning to her grandfather, she repeated, "Wa — We — Wi —"

The old man stopped her at the last syllable.

Valentine then took the dictionary, and the notary watched her while she turned over the pages.

She passed her finger slowly down the columns, and when she came to the word "Will," M. Noirtier's eye bade her stop.

"Will!" cried the notary; "it is very evident that M. Noirtier is desirous of making his will."

"Yes, yes, yes!" motioned the invalid.

"Really, sir, you must allow that this is most extraordinary," said the astonished notary, turning to M. de Villefort.

"Yes," said the procureur; "and I think the will promises to be yet more extraordinary; for I cannot see how it is to be drawn up without the intervention of Valentine, and she may, perhaps, be considered as too much interested in its contents to allow of her being a suitable interpreter of the obscure and ill-defined wishes of her grandfather."

"No, no, no!" replied the eye of the paralytic.

"What!" said Villefort, "do you mean to say that Valentine is not interested in your will?"

"No."

"Sir," said the notary, whose interest had been greatly excited, and who had resolved on publishing far and wide the account of this extraordinary and picturesque scene, "what appeared so impossible to me an hour ago, has now become quite easy and practicable; and this may be a perfectly valid will, provided it be read in the presence of seven witnesses, approved by the testator and sealed by the notary in the presence of the witnesses. As to the time, it will certainly occupy rather more than the generality of wills. There are certain forms necessary to be gone through, and which are always the same. As to the details, the greater part will be furnished afterward, by the state in which we find the affairs of the testator, and by yourself, who, having had the management of them, can, doubtless, give full information on the subject. But, besides all this, in order that the instrument may not be contested, I am anxious to give it the greatest possible authenticity: therefore, one of my colleagues will help me, and, contrary to custom, will assist in the dictation of the testament. Are you satisfied, sir?" continued the notary, addressing the old man.

"Yes," looked the invalid, his eye beaming with delight at his meaning being so well understood.

"What is he going to do?" thought Villefort, whose position demanded so much reserve, but who was longing to know what were the intentions of his father. He left the room to give orders for another notary to be sent for, but Barrois, who had heard all that passed, had guessed his master's wishes, and had already gone to fetch one. The procureur du roi then told his wife to come up.

In the course of a quarter of an hour every one had assembled in the chamber of the paralytic; the second notary had also arrived. A few words sufficed for a mutual understanding between the two officers of the law. They read to Noirtier the formal copy of a will, in order to give him an idea of the terms in which such documents

are generally couched; then, in order to test the capacity of the testator, the first notary said, turning towards him:

"When an individual makes his will, it is generally in favor or in prejudice of some person?"

"Yes."

"Have you an exact idea of the amount of your fortune?"

"Yes."

"I will name to you several sums, which will increase by graduation; you will stop me when I reach the one representing the amount of your own possessions?"

"Yes."

There was a kind of solemnity in this interrogation. Never had the struggle between mind and matter been more apparent than now; and if it was not a sublime, it was, at least, a curious spectacle. They had formed a circle around the invalid; the second notary was sitting at the table, prepared for writing, and his colleague was standing before the testator in the act of interrogating him on the subject to which we have alluded.

"Your fortune exceeds 300,000 francs, does it not?" asked he.

Noirtier made a sign that it did.

"Do you possess 400,000 francs?" inquired the notary. Noirtier's eyes remained immovable.

"500,000?"

The same expression continued.

"600,000 — 700,000 — 800,000 — 900,000?"

Noirtier stopped him at the last-named sum.

"You are then in possession of 900,000 francs?" asked the notary.

"Yes."

"In landed property?"

"No."

"In stock?"

"Yes."

"The stock is in your own hands?"

The look which M. Noirtier cast on Barrois showed that there was something wanted which he knew where to find. The old servant left the room, and presently returned, bringing with him a small casket.

"Do you permit us to open this casket?" asked the notary.

Noirtier gave his assent.

They opened it, and found 900,000 francs in bank scrip.

The first notary handed over each note, as he examined it, to his colleague. The total amount was found to be as M. Noirtier had stated.

"It is all as he has said; it is very evident that the mind still retains its full force and vigor." Then, turning towards the paralytic, he said, "You possess, then, 900,000 francs of capital, which, according to the manner in which you have invested it, ought to bring in an income of about 40,000 livres."

"Yes."

"To whom do you desire to leave this fortune?"

"Oh," said Madame de Villefort, "there is not much doubt on that subject. M. Noirtier tenderly loves his granddaughter, Mademoiselle de Villefort; it is she who has nursed and tended him for six years, and has, by her devoted attention, fully secured the affection—I had almost said the gratitude—of her grandfather, and it is but just that she should reap the fruit of the devotion."

The eye of Noirtier clearly showed by its expression that he was not deceived by the false assent given by Madame de Villefort's words and manner to the motives which she supposed him to entertain.

"Is it, then, to Mademoiselle Valentine de Villefort that you leave these 900,000 francs?" demanded the notary, thinking he had only to insert this clause, but waiting first for the assent of Noirtier, which it was necessary should be given before all the witnesses of this singular scene.

Valentine, when her name was made the subject of discussion, had stepped back to escape unpleasant observa-

tion; her eyes were cast down, and she was crying. The old man looked at her for an instant with an expression of the deepest tenderness; then, turning towards the notary, he significantly winked his eyes in token of dissent.

"What?" said the notary, "do you not intend making Mademoiselle Valentine de Villefort your residuary legatee?"

"No."

"You are not making any mistake, are you?" said the notary, "you really mean to declare that such is not your intention."

"No, no."

Valentine raised her head; she was struck dumb with astonishment. It was not so much the conviction that she was disinherited which caused her grief, but her total inability to account for the feelings which had provoked her grandfather to such an act; but Noirtier looked at her with so much affectionate tenderness, that she exclaimed:

"Oh, grandpapa! I see now that it is only your fortune of which you deprive me; you still leave me the love which I have always enjoyed."

"Ah, yes, most assuredly!" said the eyes of the paralytic; for he closed them with an expression which Valentine could not mistake.

"Thank you! thank you!" murmured she.

The old man's declaration that Valentine was not the destined inheritor of his fortune had excited the hopes of Madame de Villefort; she gradually approached the invalid, and said:

"Then doubtless, dear M. Noirtier, you intend leaving your fortune to your grandson, Edward de Villefort!"

The winking of the eyes which answered this speech was most decided and terrible, and expressed a feeling almost amounting to hatred.

"No?" said the notary; "then perhaps it is your son, M. de Villefort?"

"No."

The two notaries looked at each other in mute astonishment and inquiry as to what were the real intentions of the testator. Villefort and his wife both blushed and changed color — one from shame, the other from anger.

"What have we all done, then, dear grandpapa?" said Valentine; "you no longer seem to love any of us?"

The old man's eyes passed rapidly from Villefort and his wife, and rested on Valentine with a look of unutterable fondness.

"Well," said she, "if you love me, grandpapa, try and bring that love to bear upon your actions at the present moment. You know me well enough to be quite sure that I have never thought of your fortune; besides, they say I am already rich in right of my mother — too rich, even. Explain yourself, then."

Noirtier fixed his intelligent eyes on Valentine's hand.

"My hand?" said she.

"Yes."

"Her hand!" exclaimed every one.

"Oh, gentlemen! you see it is all useless, and that my father's mind is really impaired," said Villefort.

"Ah!" cried Valentine, suddenly, "I understand! It is my marriage you mean, is it not, dear grandpapa?"

"Yes, yes, yes," signed the paralytic, casting a look on Valentine of joyful gratitude, for having guessed his meaning.

"You are angry with us all on account of this marriage, are you not?"

"Yes."

"Really, this is too absurd," said Villefort.

"Excuse me, sir," replied the notary; "on the contrary, M. Noirtier's meaning is quite evident to me, and I can easily connect the train of ideas passing in his mind."

"You do not wish me to marry M. Franz d'Epinay?" observed Valentine.

"I do not wish it," said the eyes of her grandfather.

"And do you disinherit your granddaughter," continued

the notary, "because she has contracted an engagement contrary to your wishes?"

"Yes."

"So that but for this marriage she would have been your heir?"

"Yes."

There was a profound silence. The two notaries were holding a consultation as to the best means of proceeding with the affair. Valentine was looking at her grandfather with a smile of intense gratitude, and Villefort was biting his lips with vexation, whilst Madame de Villefort could not succeed in repressing an inward feeling of joy, which, in spite of herself, appeared in her whole countenance.

"But," said Villefort, who was the first to break the silence, "I consider that I am the best judge of the propriety of the marriage in question. I am the only person possessing the right to dispose of my daughter's hand. It is my wish that she should marry M. Franz d'Epinaÿ — and she shall marry him!"

Valentine sank weeping into a chair.

"Sir," said the notary, "how do you intend disposing of your fortune in case Mademoiselle de Villefort still determines on marrying M. Franz?"

The old man gave no answer.

"You will of course, dispose of it in some way or other?"

"Yes."

"In favor of some member of your family?"

"No."

"Do you intend devoting it to charitable purposes, then?" pursued the notary.

"Yes."

"But," said the notary, "you are aware that the law does not allow a son to be entirely deprived of his patrimony?"

"Yes."

"You only intend, then, to dispose of that part of your

fortune which the law allows you to subtract from the inheritance of your son ? ”

Noirtier made no answer.

“Do you still wish to dispose of all ? ”

“Yes.”

“But they will contest the will after your death ? ”

“No.”

“My father knows me,” replied Villefort; “he is quite sure that his wishes will be held sacred by me; besides, he understands that in my position I cannot plead against the poor.”

The eye of Noirtier beamed with triumph.

“What do you decide on, sir ? ” asked the notary of Villefort.

“Nothing, sir; it is a resolution which my father has taken, and I know he never alters his mind. I am quite resigned. These 900,000 francs will go out of the family in order to enrich some hospital; but it is ridiculous thus to yield to the caprices of an old man; and I shall therefore act according to my conscience.”

Having said this, Villefort quitted the room with his wife, leaving his father at liberty to do as he pleased.

The same day the will was made, the witnesses were brought, it was approved by the old man, sealed in the presence of all, and given in charge of M. Deschamps, the family notary.

CHAPTER LX.

THE TELEGRAPH.

ON their return, M. and Madame de Villefort found that the Count of Monte-Cristo, who had come to visit them in their absence, had been ushered into the drawing-room, and was still awaiting them there. Madame de Villefort, who had not yet sufficiently recovered from her late emotion to allow of her entertaining visitors so soon, retired to her bedroom, whilst the procureur du roi, who could better depend upon himself, proceeded at once to the drawing-room.

Although M. de Villefort flattered himself that, to all outward view, he had completely masked the feelings which were passing in his mind, he did not know that the cloud was still lowering on his brow, so much so that the count immediately remarked his sombre and thoughtful air.

"*Ma foi!*" said Monte-Cristo, after the first compliments were over, "what is the matter with you, M. de Villefort? Have I arrived at the moment that you were drawing up some case of capital indictment?"

Villefort tried to smile.

"No, M. le comte," replied M. de Villefort, "I am the only victim in this case. It is I who lose my cause; and it is ill-luck, obstinacy, and folly, which have caused it to be decided against me."

"To what do you allude?" said Monte-Cristo, with well-feigned interest. "Have you really met with some great misfortune?"

"Oh! M. le comte," said Villefort, with a bitter smile, "it is only a loss of money which I have sustained — nothing worth mentioning, I assure you."

"True," said Monte-Cristo, "the loss of a sum of money becomes almost immaterial with a fortune such as you possess, and a mind raised, as yours is, above the common events of life."

"It is not so much the loss of the money which vexes me," said Villefort, "though, after all, 900,000 francs are worth regretting; but I am the more annoyed with this fate, chance, or whatever you please to call the power which has destroyed my hopes and my fortune, and may blast the prospects of my child also, as it is all occasioned by an old man relapsed into second childhood."

"What do you say?" said the count; "900,000 francs! it is indeed a sum which might be regretted even by a philosopher. And who is the cause of all this annoyance?"

"My father, as I told you."

"M. Noirtier! but I thought you told me he had become entirely paralyzed, and that all his faculties were completely destroyed?"

"Yes, his bodily faculties, for he can neither move nor speak; nevertheless, he thinks, acts, and wills in the manner I have described. I left him about five minutes ago, and he is now occupied in dictating his will to two notaries."

"But to do this he must have spoken?"

"He has done better than that, he has made himself understood."

"How was such a thing possible?"

"By the help of his eyes, which are still full of life, and, as you perceive, possess the power of inflicting mortal injury."

"My dear," said Madame de Villefort, who had just entered the room, "perhaps you exaggerate the evil."

"Good morning, madame," said the count, bowing.

Madame de Villefort acknowledged the salutation with one of her most gracious smiles.

"What is this that M. de Villefort has been telling me?" demanded Monte-Cristo, "and what incomprehensible misfortune ——"

"Incomprehensible is not the word!" interrupted the procureur du roi, shrugging his shoulders. "It is an old man's caprice."

"And is there no means of making him revoke the decision?"

"Yes," said Madame de Villefort; "and it is still entirely in the power of my husband to cause the will, which is now in prejudice of Valentine, to be altered in her favor."

The count, who perceived that M. and Madame de Villefort were beginning to speak in parables, appeared to pay no attention to the conversation, and feigned to be busily engaged in watching Edward, who was mischievously pouring some ink in the bird's water glass.

"My dear," said Villefort, in answer to his wife, "you know I have never been accustomed to play the patriarch in my family, nor have I ever considered that the fate of a universe was to be decided by my nod. Nevertheless, it is necessary that my will should be respected in my family, and that the folly of an old man and the caprice of a child should not be allowed to overturn a project which I have entertained for so many years. The Baron d'Epinay was my friend, as you know, and an alliance with his son is the most suitable thing that could possibly be arranged."

"Do you think," said Madame de Villefort, "that Valentine is in league with him? She has always been opposed to this marriage, and I should not be at all surprised if what we have just seen and heard is nothing but the execution of a plan concerted between them."

"Madame," said Villefort, "believe me, a fortune of 900,000 francs is not so easily renounced."

"She could, nevertheless, make up her mind to renounce the world, since it is only about a year ago that she herself proposed entering a convent."

"Never mind," replied Villefort; "I say that this marriage shall be consummated!"

"Notwithstanding your father's wishes to the contrary?" said Madame de Villefort, selecting a new point of attack. "That is a serious thing!"

Monte-Cristo, who pretended not to be listening, heard, however, every word that was said.

"Madame," replied Villefort, "I can truly say that I have always entertained a high respect for my father, because to the natural feeling of relationship was added the consciousness of his moral superiority. The name of father is sacred in two senses: he should be revered as the author of our being, and as a master whom we ought to obey; but under the present circumstances I am justified in doubting the wisdom of an old man who, because he hated the father, vents his anger on the son; it would be ridiculous in me to regulate my conduct by such caprices. I shall still continue to preserve the same respect towards M. Noirtier; I will suffer, without complaint, the pecuniary deprivation to which he has subjected me; but I will remain firm in my determination, and the world shall see which party has reason on his side. Consequently I shall marry my daughter to the Baron Franz d'Epinay, because I consider it would be a proper and eligible match for her to make, and, in short, because I choose to bestow my daughter's hand on whomsoever I please."

"What," said the count, the approbation of whose eye Villefort had frequently solicited during this speech, "do you say that M. Noirtier disinherits Mademoiselle de Villefort because she is going to marry M. le Baron Franz d'Epinay?"

"Yes, sir, that is the reason," said Villefort, shrugging his shoulders.

"The apparent reason, at least," said Madame de Villefort.

"The *real* reason, madame, I can assure you; I know my father."

"But I want to know in what way M. d'Epinay can have displeased your father more than any other person?"

"I believe I know M. Franz d'Epinay," said the count; "is he not the son of General de Quesnel, who was created Baron d'Epinay by Charles X.?"

"The same," said Villefort.

"Well! but he is a charming young man, according to my ideas."

"He is, which makes me believe that it is only an excuse of M. Noirtier to prevent his granddaughter marrying; old men are always so selfish in their affection," said Madame de Villefort.

"But," said Monte-Cristo, "do you know any cause for this hatred?"

"Ah, *ma foi*! who is to know?"

"Perhaps it is some political difference?"

"My father and the Baron d'Epinay lived in those stormy times of which I have only seen the last few days," said De Villefort.

"Was not your father a Bonapartist?" asked Monte-Cristo; "I think I remember that you told me something of that kind."

"My father has been a Jacobin more than anything else," said Villefort, carried by his emotion beyond the bounds of prudence; "and the senator's robe, which Napoleon cast on his shoulders, only served to disguise the old man, without in any degree changing him. When my father conspired, it was not for the emperor, it was against the Bourbons; for M. Noirtier possessed this peculiarity, he never projected any Utopian schemes which could not be realized, but strove for possibilities, and he applied to the realization of these possibilities the terrible theories of Montaigne, who never shrunk from any means which he deemed necessary to their accomplishment."

"Well," said Monte-Cristo, "it is just as I thought; it

was politics which brought Noirtier and M. d'Epinay into personal contact. Although General d'Epinay served under Napoleon, did he not still retain royalist sentiments? And was he not the person assassinated one evening on leaving a Bonapartist meeting to which he had been invited on the supposition of his favoring the cause of the emperor?"

Villefort looked at the count almost in terror.

"Am I mistaken, then?" said Monte-Cristo.

"No, sir, the facts were precisely what you have stated," said Madame de Villefort; "and it was to prevent the renewal of old feuds that M. de Villefort formed the idea of uniting in the bonds of affection the two children of these inveterate enemies."

"It was a sublime and charitable thought," said Monte-Cristo, "and the whole world should applaud it. It would be noble to see Mademoiselle Noirtier de Villefort assuming the title of Madame Franz d'Epinay."

Villefort shuddered, and looked at Monte-Cristo as if he wished to read in his countenance the real feelings which had dictated the words he had just pronounced. But the count completely baffled the penetration of the procureur du roi and prevented him from discovering anything beneath the never-varying smile he was so constantly in the habit of assuming.

"Although," said De Villefort, "it will be a serious thing for Valentine to lose the fortune of her grandfather, I do not think the marriage will be prevented on that account, nor do I believe that M. d'Epinay will be frightened at this pecuniary loss; he will, perhaps, hold me in greater esteem than the money itself, seeing that I sacrifice everything in order to keep my word with him; besides, he knows that Valentine is rich in right of her mother, and that she will, in all probability, inherit the fortune of M. and Madame de Saint-Meran, her mother's parents, who both love her tenderly."

"And who are both fully as worth loving and tending

as M. de Noirtier," said Madame de Villefort; "besides, they are to come to Paris in about a month, and Valentine, after the affront she has received, need not consider it necessary to continue to bury herself alive by being shut up with M. Noirtier."

The count listened with satisfaction to this tale of wounded self-love and defeated ambition.

"But it seems to me," said Monte-Cristo, "and I must begin by asking your pardon for what I am about to say, that if M. Noirtier disinherits Mademoiselle de Villefort on account of her marrying a man whose father he detested, he cannot have the same cause of complaint against this dear Edward."

"True," said Madame de Villefort, with an intonation of voice which it is impossible to describe; "is it not unjust — shamefully unjust? Poor Edward is as much M. Noirtier's grandchild as Valentine, and yet if she had not been going to marry M. Franz, M. Noirtier would have left her all his money; and supposing Mlle. Valentine to be disinherited by her grandfather, she will still be three times richer than he."

The count listened and said no more.

"M. le comte," said Villefort, "we will not entertain you any longer with our family misfortunes. It is true that my patrimony will go to endow charitable institutions, and my father will have deprived me of my lawful inheritance without any reason for doing so; but I shall have the satisfaction of knowing that I have acted like a man of sense and feeling. M. d'Epinay, to whom I had promised the interest of this sum, shall receive it, even if I endure the most cruel privations."

"However," said Madame de Villefort, returning to the one idea which incessantly occupied her mind, "perhaps it would be better to represent this unlucky affair to M. d'Epinay in order to give him the opportunity of himself renouncing his claim to the hand of Mademoiselle de Villefort."

"Ah, that would be a great pity," said Villefort.

"A great pity!" said Monte-Cristo.

"Undoubtedly," said Villefort, moderating the tones of his voice, "a marriage, once concerted, and then broken off, throws a sort of discredit on a young lady; then, again, the old reports, which I was so anxious to put an end to, will instantly gain ground — no, it will all go well: M. d'Epinay, if he is an honorable man, will consider himself more than ever pledged to Mademoiselle de Villefort; unless he were actuated by a decided feeling of avarice; but that is impossible."

"I agree with M. de Villefort," said Monte-Cristo, fixing his eyes on Madame de Villefort; "and if I were sufficiently intimate with him to allow of giving my advice, I would persuade him, since I have been told M. d'Epinay is coming back, to settle this affair at once beyond all possibility of revocation. I will answer for the success of a project which will reflect so much honor on M. de Villefort."

The procureur du roi rose, delighted with the proposition, but his wife slightly changed color.

"Well, that is all I wanted, and I will be guided by a counsellor such as you are," said he, extending his hand to Monte-Cristo. "Therefore, let every one here look upon what has passed to-day as if it had not happened, and as though we had never thought of such a thing as a change in our original plans."

"Sir," said the count, "the world, unjust as it is, will be pleased with your resolution; your friends will be proud of you, and M. d'Epinay, even if he took Mademoiselle de Villefort without any dowry, which he will not do, would be delighted with the idea of entering a family which could make such sacrifices in order to keep a promise and fulfil a duty."

At the conclusion of these words the count rose to depart.

"Are you going to leave us, M. le comte?" said Madame de Villefort.

"I am sorry to say I must do so, madame; I only came to remind you of your promise for Saturday."

"Did you fear that we should forget it?"

"You are very good, madame; but M. de Villefort has so many important and urgent occupations."

"My husband has given his word, sir," said Madame de Villefort; "you have just seen him resolve to keep it when he has all to lose, and surely there is more reason for his doing so where he has all to gain!"

"And," said Villefort, "is it at your house in the Champs Elysées that you receive your visitors?"

"No," said Monte-Cristo, "which is precisely the reason which renders your kindness more meritorious — it is in the country."

"In the country?"

"Yes."

"Where is it, then — near Paris, is it not?"

"Very near; only half a league from the Barriers — it is at Auteuil."

"At Auteuil?" said Villefort; "true, Madame de Villefort told me you lived at Auteuil, since it was to your house that she was taken. And in what part of Auteuil do you reside?"

"Rue de la Fontaine."

"Rue de la Fontaine!" exclaimed Villefort, in an agitated tone; "at what number?"

"No. 28."

"Then," cried Villefort, "was it you who bought M. de Saint-Meran's house?"

"Did it belong to M. de Saint-Meran?" demanded Monte-Cristo.

"Yes," replied Madame de Villefort, "and, would you believe it, M. le comte ——"

"Believe what?"

"You think this house pretty, do you not?"

"I think it charming."

"Well! my husband would never live in it."

"Indeed!" returned Monte-Cristo; "that is a prejudice on your part, M. de Villefort, for which I am quite at a loss to account."

"I do not like Auteuil, sir," said the procureur du roi, making an evident effort to appear calm.

"But I hope you will not carry your antipathy so far as to deprive me of the pleasure of your company, sir!" said Monte-Cristo.

"No, M. le comte — I hope — I assure you I will do all I can," stammered Villefort.

"Oh," said Monte-Cristo, "I allow of no excuse. On Saturday, at six o'clock, I shall be expecting you, and if you fail to come I shall think — for how do I know to the contrary? — that this house, which has remained uninhabited for twenty years, must have some gloomy tradition or dreadful legend connected with it."

"I will come, M. le comte — I will be sure to come," said Villefort, eagerly.

"Thank you," said Monte-Cristo; "now you must permit me to take my leave of you."

"You said before you were obliged to leave us, M. le comte," said Madame de Villefort, "and you were about to tell us the nature of the engagement which was to deprive us of the pleasure of your society, when your attention was called to some other subject."

"Indeed, madame!" said Monte-Cristo; "I scarcely know if I dare tell you where I am going."

"Bah!"

"Well, then, it is to see a thing on which I have sometimes mused for hours together."

"What is it?"

"A telegraph. So now I have told my secret."

"A telegraph!" repeated Madame de Villefort.

"Yes, a telegraph! I had often seen one placed at the end of a road on a hillock, and in the light of the sun its black arms, bending in every direction, always reminded one of the claws of an immense beetle; and I assure you it

was never without emotion that I gazed on it, for I could not help thinking how wonderful it was that these various signs should be made to cleave the air with such precision as to convey to the distance of three hundred leagues the ideas and wishes of a man sitting at a table at one end of the line to another man similarly placed at the opposite extremity, and all this effected by the simple act of volition on the part of the individual communicating the intelligence. I began to think of genii, sylphs, gnomes, in short, all the ministers of the occult sciences, until I laughed aloud at the freaks of my own imagination. Now, it never occurred to me to wish for a nearer inspection of these large insects, with their long black claws, for I always feared to find under their stone wings some little human genius fagged to death with cabals, factions, and government intrigues. But one fine day I learned that the mover of this telegraph was only a poor wretch, hired for 1,200 francs a year, and employed all the day, not in studying the heavens like an astronomer, nor in gazing on the water like an angler, nor even enjoying the privilege of observing the country around him; but all his monotonous life was passed in watching his fellow-insect, who was placed four or five leagues distant from him. At length I experienced a desire to observe nearer this living chrysalis, and to endeavor to understand the secret part played by those insect-actors simply by means of successively pulling different pieces of string."

"And are you going there?"

"I am."

"What telegraph do you intend visiting? that of the home department, or of the observatoire?"

"Oh, no! I shall find there people who will force me to understand things of which I would prefer to remain ignorant, and who would try to explain to me, in spite of myself, a mystery which even they did not understand. *Ma foi!* I should wish to keep my illusions concerning insects unimpaired; it is quite enough to have those dissipated

which I had formed of my fellow-creatures. I shall, therefore, not visit either of these telegraphs, but one in the open country, where I shall find a good-natured simpleton, who knows no more than the machine he is employed to work."

"You are a singular man," said Villefort.

"What line would you advise me to study?"

"That which is most in use just at this time."

"The Spanish one, you mean, I suppose."

"Yes; should you like a letter to the minister that they might explain to you ——"

"No," said Monte-Cristo; "since, as I told you before, I do not wish to comprehend it. The moment I understand it, there will no longer exist a telegraph for me, it will be nothing more than a sign from M. Duchatel, or from M. Montalivet, transmitted to the préfet of Bayonne, mystified by two words, *télé, graphéin*. It is the insect with black claws, and the awful word, which I wish to retain in my imagination in all its purity and in all its importance."

"Go, then; for in the course of two hours it will be dark, and you will not be able to see anything."

"*Ma foi!* you frighten me. Which is the nearest way? Bayonne?"

"Yes! the road to Bayonne!"

"And afterwards the road to Chatillon."

"Yes."

"By the tower of Montlhery, you mean?"

"Yes."

"Thank you. Good-bye. On Saturday I will tell you my impressions concerning the telegraph."

At the door the count was met by the two notaries, who had just completed the act which was to disinherit Valentine, and who were leaving under the conviction of having done a thing which could not fail of redounding considerably to their credit.

CHAPTER LXI.

RIDING A GARDENER OF DORMICE THAT ATE HIS
PEACHES.

NOT on the same night he had intended, but the next morning, the Count of Monte-Cristo went out by the Barrier d'Enfer, taking the road to Orleans. Leaving the village of Linas, without stopping at the telegraph, which, at the moment the count passed, threw out its long bony arms, he reached the tower of Montlhery, situated, as every one knows, upon the highest point of the plain of that name. At the foot of the hill the count dismounted, and began to ascend the mountain by a little winding path, about eighteen inches wide; when he reached the summit he found himself stopped by a hedge, upon which green fruit had succeeded to red and white flowers.

Monte-Cristo looked for the door of the inclosure, and was not long in finding it. It was a little wooden gate, working on willow hinges, and fastened with a nail and string. The count soon understood its mechanism, and the door opened. He then found himself in a little garden about twenty feet long by twelve wide, bounded on one side by part of the hedge, in which was formed the ingenious machine we have named a door; and on the other by the old tower, covered with ivy and studded with wild flowers. No one would have thought to have seen it thus wrinkled and yet adorned, like an old lady whose grandchildren come to greet her on her birthday, that it could have related some terrible scenes, if it could have added a voice to the menacing ears which an old proverb awards to walls. The garden was crossed by a path of red gravel.

edged by a border of thick box of many years' growth and of a tone and color that would have delighted the heart of Delacroix, our modern Rubens. This path was formed in the shape of the figure 8, thus, in its windings, making a walk of sixty feet in a garden of only twenty. Never had Flora, the fresh and smiling goddess of gardeners, been honored with a purer or more minute worship than that which was paid to her in this little inclosure. In fact, of the twenty rose-trees which formed the *parterre*, not one bore the mark of the fly, nor were there to be seen any of those clusters of green insects which destroy plants growing in a damp soil. And yet it was not because the damp had been excluded from the garden; the earth, black as soot, the thick foliage of the trees, told it was there; besides, had natural humidity been wanting, it could have been immediately supplied by artificial means, thanks to a tank of water, sunk in one of the corners of the garden, and upon which were stationed a frog and a toad, who from antipathy, no doubt, always remained on the opposite sides of the basin. There was not a blade of grass to be seen in the paths, nor a weed in the flower-beds; no fine lady ever trained and watered her geraniums, her cactus, and rhododendrons, with more pains than this hitherto unseen gardener bestowed upon his little inclosure. Monte-Cristo stopped after having closed the door and fastened the string to the nail, and cast a look around.

"The man at the telegraph," said he, "must either engage a gardener or devote himself passionately to agriculture."

Suddenly he struck himself against something crouching behind a wheelbarrow filled with leaves; then something rose, uttering an exclamation of astonishment, and Monte-Cristo found himself facing a man about fifty years old, who was plucking strawberries, which he was placing upon vine-leaves. He had twelve leaves and about as many strawberries, which, on rising suddenly, he let fall from his hand.

"You are gathering your crop, sir?" said Monte-Cristo, smiling.

"Excuse me, sir," replied the man, raising his hand to his cap; "I am not up there, I know, but I have only just come down."

"Do not let me interfere with you in anything, my friend," said the count; "gather your strawberries, if, indeed, there are any left."

"I have ten left," said the man, "for here are eleven, and I had twenty-one, five more than last year. But I am not surprised: the spring has been warm this year, and strawberries require heat, sir. This is the reason that, instead of the sixteen I had last year, I have this year, you see, eleven, already plucked — twelve, thirteen, fourteen, fifteen, sixteen, seventeen, eighteen. Ah, I miss two; they were here last night, sir — I am sure they were here — I counted them. It must be the son of Mère Simon who has stolen them; I saw him strolling about here this morning. Ah, the young rascal! stealing in a garden; he does not know what that may lead to."

"Certainly it is wrong," said Monte-Cristo; "but you should take into considerations the youth and greediness of the delinquent."

"Of course," said the gardener; "but that does not make it less unpleasant. But, sir, once more I beg pardon; perhaps you are an officer that I am detaining here?" and he glanced timidly at the count's blue coat.

"Calm yourself, my friend," said the count, with that smile which at his will became so terrible or benevolent, and which this time beamed only with the latter expression; "I am not an inspector, but a traveller, conducted here by a curiosity he half repents of, since he causes you to lose your time."

"Ah! my time is not valuable," replied the man, with a melancholy smile. "Still, it belongs to the government, and I ought not to waste it; but having received the signal that I might rest for an hour" (here he glanced at the sun-

dial — for there was everything in the inclosure of Montlhery, even a sun-dial), “and having ten minutes before me, and my strawberries being ripe, when a day longer — by the bye, sir, do you think dormice eat them?”

“Indeed, I should think not,” replied Monte-Cristo; “dormice are bad neighbors for us who do not eat them preserved, as the Romans did.”

“What! did the Romans eat them?” said the gardener, “eat dormice?”

“I have read so in Petronius,” said the count.

“Really! They can’t be nice, though they do say ‘as fat as a dormouse.’ It is no wonder they are fat, sleeping all day, and only waking to eat all night. Listen. Last year I had four apricots; they stole one. I had one nectarine — only one; well, sir, they ate half of it on the wall — a splendid nectarine: I never ate a better.”

“You ate it?”

“That is to say, the half that was left — you understand? it was exquisite, sir. Ah! those gentlemen never choose the worst morsels; like Mère Simon’s son, who has not chosen the worst strawberries. But this year,” continued the horticulturist, “I’ll take care it shall not happen, even if I should be forced to sit up the whole night to watch when the strawberries are ripe.”

Monte-Cristo had seen enough. Every man has a devouring passion in his heart, as every fruit has its worm; that of the man at the telegraph was horticulture. He began gathering the vine-leaves which screened the sun from the grapes, and won the heart of the gardener.

“Did you come here, sir, to see the telegraph?” he said.

“Yes; if it be not contrary to the rules.”

“Oh, no!” said the gardener; “there are no orders against doing so, providing there is nothing dangerous, and no one knows what we are saying.”

“I have been told,” said the count, “that you do not always yourselves understand the signals you repeat.”

"Certainly, sir; and that is what I like best," said the man, smiling.

"Why do you like that best?"

"Because then I have no responsibility; I am a machine then — nothing else, and so long as I work, nothing more is required of me."

"Is it possible," said Monte-Cristo to himself, "that I can have met with a man that has no ambition? That would spoil my plans."

"Sir," said the gardener, glancing at the sun-dial, "the ten minutes are nearly expired, I must return to my post. Will you go up with me?"

"I follow you."

Monte-Cristo entered the tower, which was divided into three stages; the lowest contained gardening implements, such as spades, rakes, watering-pots, hung against the wall; this was all the furniture. The second was the usual dwelling, or rather sleeping-place, of the man; it contained a few poor articles of household furniture — a bed, a table, two chairs, a stone pitcher, and some dry herbs, hung up to the ceiling, which the count recognized as sweet peas, and of which the good man was preserving the seeds, having labelled them with as much care as if he had been master botanist in the Jardin des Plantes.

"Does it require much study to learn the art of telegraphing, sir?" asked Monte-Cristo.

"The study does not take long: it was acting as a supernumerary that was so tedious."

"And what is the pay?"

"A thousand francs, sir."

"It is nothing."

"No; but then we are lodged, as you perceive."

Monte-Cristo looked at the room.

They passed on to the third stage — it was the room of the telegraph. Monte-Cristo looked in turns at the two iron handles by which the machine was worked



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NAWAS SALAR JUNG SAKADUR.



"It is very interesting," he said; "but it must be very tedious for a life-time."

"Yes! at first my neck was cramped with looking at it, but at the end of a year I became used to it; and then we have our hours of recreation and our holidays."

"Holidays!"

"Yes."

"When?"

"When we have a fog."

"Ah, to be sure."

"Those are, indeed, holidays to me; I go into the garden, I plant, I prune, I trim, I kill the insects, all day long."

"How long have you been here?"

"Ten years, and five as a supernumerary, make fifteen."

"You are ——"

"Fifty-five years old."

"How long must you have served to claim the pension?"

"Oh, sir! twenty-five years."

"And how much is the pension?"

"A hundred crowns."

"Poor humanity!" murmured Monte-Cristo.

"What did you say, sir?" asked the man.

"I was saying it was very interesting."

"What was?"

"All you were showing me. And you really understand none of these signals?"

"None at all."

"And have you never tried to understand them?"

"Never! why should I?"

"But still there are some signals only addressed to you."

"Certainly."

"And do you understand them?"

"They are always the same."

"And they mean ——"

"Nothing new; You have an hour; or To-morrow."

"This is simple enough," said the count; "but, look, is not your correspondent putting itself in motion?"

"Ah, yes: thank you, sir."

"And what is it saying — anything you understand?"

"Yes; it asks if I am ready."

"And you reply?"

"By the sign, which, at the same time, tells my right-hand correspondent that I am ready, while it gives notice to my left-hand correspondent to prepare in his turn."

"It is very ingenious," said the count.

"You will see," said the man proudly, "in five minutes he will speak."

"I have, then, five minutes," said Monte-Cristo to himself; "it is more time than I require. My dear sir, will you allow me to ask you a question?"

"What is it, sir?"

"You are fond of gardening?"

"Passionately."

"And you would be pleased to have, instead of this terrace of twenty feet, an inclosure of two acres?"

"Sir, I should make a terrestrial paradise of it."

"You live badly on your thousand francs?"

"Badly enough; but yet I do live."

"Yes! but you have only a wretched garden."

"True, the garden is not large."

"And, then, such as it is, it is filled with dormice, who eat everything."

"Ah! they are my scourges."

"Tell me, should you have the misfortune to turn your head while your right-hand correspondent was telegraphing ——"

"I should not see him."

"Then what would happen?"

"I could not repeat the signals."

"And then?"

"Not having repeated them, through negligence, I should be fined."

"How much?"

"A hundred francs."

"The tenth of your income — that would be fine work."

"Ah!" said the man.

"Has it ever happened to you?" said Monte-Cristo.

"Once sir, when I was grafting a rose-tree."

"Well, suppose you were to alter a signal, and substitute another?"

"Ah, that is another case, I should be turned off and lose my pension."

"Three hundred francs."

"A hundred crowns, yes, sir; so you see that I am not likely to do any of these things."

"Not even for fifteen years' wages? Come, it is worth thinking about?"

"For fifteen thousand francs?"

"Yes."

"Sir, you alarm me."

"Nonsense!"

"Sir, you are tempting me!"

"Just so! fifteen thousand francs, do you understand?"

"Sir, let me see my right-hand correspondent!"

"On the contrary, do not look at him, but on this."

"What is it?"

"What! do you not know these little papers?"

"Bank-notes!"

"Exactly; there are fifteen of them."

"And whose are they?"

"Yours, if you like."

"Mine!" exclaimed the man, half suffocated.

"Yes; yours — your own property."

"Sir, my right-hand correspondent is signalling."

"Let him!"

"Sir, you have distracted me, I shall be fined!"

"That will cost you a hundred francs; you see it is your interest to take my bank-notes."

"Sir, my right-hand correspondent redoubles his signals; he is impatient."

"Never mind — take these," and the count placed the packet in the hands of the man.

"Now, this is not all," he said; "you cannot live upon your fifteen thousand francs."

"I shall still have my place."

"No! you will lose it, for you are going to alter the sign of your correspondent."

"Oh, sir, what are you proposing?"

"A jest."

"Sir, unless you force me ——"

"I think I can effectually force you," and Monte-Cristo drew another packet from his pocket. "Here are ten thousand more francs," he said, "with the fifteen thousand already in your pocket, they will make twenty-five thousand. With five thousand you can buy a pretty little house with two acres of land; the remaining twenty thousand will bring you in a thousand francs a year."

"A garden with two acres of land!"

"And a thousand francs a year!"

"Oh, heaven!"

"Come, take them!" and Monte-Cristo forced the bank-notes into his hand.

"What am I to do?"

"Nothing very difficult."

"But what is it?"

"To repeat these signs." Monte-Cristo took a paper from his pocket, upon which were drawn three signs, with numbers to indicate the order in which they were to be worked.

"There, you see it will not take long."

"Yes; but ——"

"Do this, and you will have nectarines and all the rest."

The mark was hit; red with fever, while the large drops fell from his brow, the man executed, one after the other,

the three signs given by the count, notwithstanding the frightful contortions of the right-hand correspondent, who, not understanding the change, began to think the gardener had become mad. As to the left-hand one, he conscientiously repeated the same signals, which were definitely carried to the Minister of the Interior.

"Now you are rich," said Monte-Cristo.

"Yes," replied the man, "but at what price?"

"Listen, friend," said Monte-Cristo. "I do not wish to cause you any remorse; believe me, then, when I swear to you that you have wronged no man, but on the contrary have benefited mankind."

The man looked at the bank-notes, felt them, counted them; he turned pale, then red; then rushed into his room to drink a glass of water, but he had not time to reach the water-jug, and fainted in the midst of his dried herbs.

Five minutes after, the new telegraph reached the minister; Debray had the horse put to his carriage and drove to Danglars.

"Has your husband any Spanish bonds?" he asked of the baroness.

"I think so, indeed! He has six millions' worth."

"He must sell them at whatever price."

"Why?"

"Because Don Carlos has fled from Bourges, and has returned to Spain."

"How do you know?"

Debray shrugged his shoulders. "The idea of asking how I hear the news!" he said.

The baroness did not wait for a repetition; she ran to her husband, who immediately hastened to his agent, and ordered him to sell at any price.

When it was seen that Danglars sold, the Spanish funds fell directly. Danglars lost five hundred thousand francs; but he rid himself of all his Spanish shares.

The same evening the following was read in "Le Messager:"

"Telegraphic despatch. — The king, Don Carlos, has escaped the vigilance exercised over him at Bourges, and has returned to Spain by the Catalonian frontier. Barcelona has risen in his favor."

All that evening nothing was spoken of but the foresight of Danglars, who had sold his shares, and of the luck of the stock-jobber, who only lost five hundred thousand francs by such a blow. Those who had kept their shares, or bought those of Danglars, looked upon themselves as ruined, and passed a very bad night.

Next morning "Le Moniteur" contained the following:

"It was without any foundation that 'Le Messager' yesterday announced the flight of Don Carlos and the revolt of Barcelona. The king (Don Carlos) has not left Bourges, and the Peninsula is in the enjoyment of profound peace. A telegraphic signal, improperly interpreted, owing to the fog, was the cause of this error."

The funds rose one per cent. higher than they had fallen. This, reckoning his loss, and what he had missed gaining, made the difference of a million to Danglars.

"Good!" said Monte-Cristo to Morrel, who was at his house when the news arrived of the strange reverse of fortune of which Danglars had been the victim. "I have just made a discovery for twenty-five thousand francs, for which I would have paid a hundred thousand."

"What have you discovered?" asked Morrel.

"I have just discovered the method of ridding a gardener of the dormice that ate his peaches."

CHAPTER LXII.

THE PHANTOMS.

At first sight the exterior of the house at Auteuil presented nothing splendid, nothing one would expect from the destined residence of the magnificent Count of Monte-Cristo; but this simplicity was but according to the will of its master, who positively ordered nothing to be altered outside; this was seen by examining the interior. Indeed, scarcely could the door be opened before the scene changed. M. Bertuccio had outdone himself in the taste displayed in furnishing, and in the rapidity with which it was executed. As formerly the Duc d'Antin had, in a single night, caused a whole avenue of trees to be cut down that annoyed Louis XIV., so in three days had M. Bertuccio planted an entirely bare court with poplars, large spreading sycamores shading the different parts of the house, before which, instead of the usual paving-stones, half-hidden by the grass, there extended a turf-lawn but that morning laid down, and upon which the water was yet glistening. For the rest the orders had been issued by the count; he himself had given a plan to Bertuccio marking the spot where each tree was to be planted, and the shape and extent of the lawn which was to succeed the paving-stones. Thus the house had become unrecognizable, and Bertuccio himself declared he scarcely knew it, encircled as it was by a framework of trees. The overseer would not have objected, while he was about it, to have made some improvements in the garden, but the count had positively forbidden it to be touched. Bertuccio made amends, however, by loading the antechambers, staircases,

and chimneys with flowers. That which, above all, manifested the shrewdness of the steward, and the profound science of the master, the one in carrying out the ideas of the other, was, that this house, which appeared only the night before so sad and gloomy, impregnated with that sickly smell one can almost fancy to be the smell of time, had, in one day, acquired the aspects of life, was scented with its master's favorite perfumes, and had the very light regulated according to his wish. When the count arrived, he had under his touch his books and arms, his eyes rested upon his favorite pictures; his dogs, whose caresses he loved, welcomed him in the antechamber; the birds, whose songs delighted him, cheered him with their music; and the house, awakened from its long sleep, like the Sleeping Beauty in the wood, lived, sung, and bloomed like the houses we have long cherished, and in which, when we are forced to leave them, we leave a part of our souls. The servants passed gaily along the fine courtyard; some, belonging to the kitchens, gliding down the stairs, restored but the previous day, as if they had always inhabited the house; others filling the coach-houses, where the equipages, encased and numbered, appeared to have been installed for the last fifty years; and in the stables the horses replied by neighing to the grooms, who spoke to them with much more respect than many servants pay their masters.

The library was divided into two parts on either side of the wall, and contained upwards of two thousand volumes; one division was entirely devoted to novels; and even the one which had been published but the day before was to be seen in its place in all the dignity of its red and gold binding. On the other side of the house, to match with the library, was the conservatory, ornamented with rare flowers, blossoming in china jars; and in the midst of the green-house, marvellous alike to sight and smell, was a billiard-table, apparently abandoned during the last hour by the players, who had left the balls on the cloth.

One chamber alone had been respected by the magnificent Bertuccio. Before this room, to which you could ascend by the grand, and go out by the back, staircase, the servants passed with curiosity, and Bertuccio with terror.

At five o'clock precisely, the count arrived before the house at Auteuil, followed by Ali. Bertuccio was awaiting this arrival with impatience, mingled with uneasiness; he hoped for some compliments, while at the same time he feared to have frowns. Monte-Cristo descended to the courtyard, walked all over the house, without giving any sign of approbation or displeasure, until he entered his bedroom, situated on the opposite side of the closed room, when he approached a little piece of furniture, made of rosewood, which we remember to have noticed on a previous occasion.

"That will at least serve to put my gloves in," he said.

"Will your excellency deign to open it?" said the delighted Bertuccio, "and you will find gloves in it."

In all the rest of the furniture the count found everything he required — smelling-bottles, cigars, *bijouterie*.

"Good," he said; and M. Bertuccio left enraptured — so great, so powerful, and real was the influence exercised by this man over all who surrounded him.

At precisely six o'clock the clatter of horses' hoofs was heard at the entrance-door; it was our captain of Spahis, who had arrived mounted on Medea.

"I am sure I am the first," cried Morrel; "I did it on purpose to have you a minute to myself before every one came. Julie and Emmanuel have a thousand things to tell you. Ah! really, this is magnificent! But tell me, count, will your people take care of my horse?"

"Do not alarm yourself, my dear Maximilian; they understand."

"I mean because he wants petting. If you had seen at what a pace he came — like the wind."

"I should think so, — a horse that cost five thousand

frances!" said Monte-Cristo, in a tone which a father would use towards a son.

"Do you regret them?" asked Morrel, with his open laugh.

"I? Certainly not!" replied the count. "No; I should only regret if the horse had not proved good."

"It is so good that I have distanced M. de Château-Re-naud, one of the best riders in France, and M. Debray, who both mount the minister's Arabians; and close at their heels are the horses of Madame Danglars, who always go at six leagues an hour."

"Then they follow you?" asked Monte-Cristo.

"See, they are here!"

And at the same minute a carriage with smoking horses, accompanied by two mounted gentlemen, arrived at the gate, which opened before them. The carriage drove around and stopped at the steps, followed by the horsemen. The instant Debray had touched the ground, he was at the carriage-door. He offered his hand to the baroness, who, descending, took it with a peculiarity of manner imperceptible to every one but Monte-Cristo. But nothing escaped the count's notice, and he observed a little note slipped with an indescribable ease, bespeaking the frequent practice of this manœuvre, from the hand of Madame Danglars to that of the minister's secretary.

After his wife, the banker descended, pale as though he had issued from his tomb instead of his carriage. Madame Danglars threw a rapid and inquiring glance around, which could only have been interpreted by Monte-Cristo, embracing the courtyard, the peristyle, and the front of the house; then, repressing a slight emotion, which must have been seen on her countenance if she had permitted her face to become pale, she ascended the steps, saying to Morrel:

"Sir, if you were a friend of mine, I should ask if you would sell your horse."

Morrel smiled with an expression very like a grimace,

and then turned around to Monte-Cristo, as if to ask him to extricate him from his embarrassments. The count understood him.

"Ah, madame!" he said, "why did you not make that request of me?"

"With you, sir," replied the baroness, "one can wish for nothing, one is so sure to obtain it. If it were so with M. Morrel ——"

"Unfortunately," replied the count, "I am witness that M. Morrel cannot give up his horse, his honor being engaged in keeping it."

"How so?"

"He laid a wager he would tame Medea in the space of six months. You understand, now, that if he were to get rid of it before the time named, he would not only lose his bet, but people would say he was afraid of it, and a brave captain of Spahis cannot risk this even to gratify a pretty woman, which is, in my opinion, one of the most sacred obligations in the world."

"You see my position, madame," said Morrel, bestowing a grateful smile on Monte-Cristo.

"It seems to me," said Danglars, in his coarse tone, ill-concealed by a forced smile, "that you have already got horses enough."

Madame Danglars seldom allowed remarks of this kind to pass unnoticed; but, to the surprise of the young people, she pretended not to hear it, and said nothing.

Monte-Cristo smiled at her unusual humility, and showed her two immense porcelain jars, covered with marine plants of a size and delicacy that could alone emanate from nature.

The baroness was astonished.

"Why," said she, "you could plant one of the chestnut-trees in the Tuileries inside of one! How can such enormous jars have been manufactured?"

"Ah, madame," replied Monte-Cristo, "you must not ask of us, the manufacturers of glass muslin, such a

question; it is the work of another age, constructed by the genii of earth and water."

"How so? At what period can that have been?"

"I do not know; I have only heard that an emperor of China had an oven built expressly, and that in this oven twelve jars like this were successively baked. Two broke from the heat of the fire; the other ten were sunk three hundred fathoms deep into the sea. The sea, knowing what was required of her, threw over them her weeds, encircled them with coral, and encrusted them with shells; the whole was cemented by two hundred years beneath these almost impervious depths, for a revolution carried away the emperor who wished to make the trial, and only left the documents proving the manufacture of the jars, and their descent into the sea. At the end of two hundred years the documents were found, and they thought of bringing up the jars. Divers descended in machines, made expressly on the discovery, into the bay where they were thrown; but of ten, three only remained, the rest having been broken by the waves. I am fond of these jars, upon which, perhaps, misshapen, frightful monsters have fixed their cold, dull eyes, and in which myriads of small fish have slept, seeking a refuge from the pursuit of their enemies."

Meanwhile Danglars, who cared little for curiosities, was mechanically tearing off the blossoms of a splendid orange-tree, one after another. When he had finished with the orange-tree, he began at the cactus, but this not being so easily plucked as the orange-tree, pricked him dreadfully. He shuddered and rubbed his eyes, as though awaking from a dream.

"Sir," said Monte-Cristo to him, "I do not recommend my pictures to you who possess such splendid paintings; but, nevertheless, here are two by Hobbima, a Paul Potter, a Mieris, two Gerard Douw, a Raphael, a Vandyke, a Zurbaran, and two or three by Murillo, worth looking at."

"Stay!" said Debray; "I recognize this Hobbima."

"Ah, indeed!"

"Yes; it was proposed for the Museum."

"Which, I believe, does not contain one?" said Monte-Cristo.

"No; and yet they refused to buy it."

"Why?" said Château-Renaud.

"You pretend not to know, — because government was not rich enough."

"Ah! pardon me!" said Château-Renaud; "I have heard of these things every day during the last eight years, and I cannot understand them yet."

"You will by and by," said Debray.

"I think not," replied Château-Renaud.

"Major Bartolomeo Cavalcanti and Count Andrea Cavalcanti!" announced Baptistin.

A black satin stock, fresh from the maker's hands, gray moustaches, a bold eye, a major's uniform, ornamented with three medals and five crosses — in fact, the thorough bearing of an old soldier — such was the appearance of Major Bartolomeo Cavalcanti, that tender father, with whom we are already acquainted. Close to him, dressed in entirely new clothes, advanced, smilingly, Count Andrea Cavalcanti, the dutiful son, whom we also know.

The three young people were talking together. On the entrance of the newcomers, their eyes glanced from father to son, and then, naturally enough, rested on the latter, whom they began criticising.

"Cavalcanti!" said Debray.

"A fine name," said Morrel.

"Yes," said Château-Renaud, "these Italians are well named and badly dressed."

"You are fastidious, Château-Renaud," replied Debray; "those clothes are well cut and quite new."

"That is just what I find fault with. That gentleman appears to be well dressed for the first time in his life."

"Who are those gentlemen?" asked Danglars of Monte-Cristo.

"You heard, — Cavalcanti."

"That tells me their name, and nothing else."

"Ah! true. You do not know the Italian nobility: the Cavalcanti are all descended from princes."

"Have they any fortune?"

"An enormous one."

"What do they do?"

"Try to spend it all. They have some business with you, I think, from what they told me the day before yesterday. I, indeed, invited them here to-day on your account. I will introduce you to them."

"But they appear to speak French with a very pure accent," said Danglars.

"The son has been educated in a college in the south; I believe near Marseilles. You will find him quite enthusiastic."

"Upon what subject?" asked Madame Danglars.

"The French ladies, madame. He has made up his mind to take a wife from Paris."

"A fine idea, that of his!" said Danglars, shrugging his shoulders.

Madame Danglars looked at her husband with an expression which at any other time would have indicated a storm, but for the second time she controlled herself.

"The baron appears thoughtful to-day," said Monte-Cristo to her; "are they going to put him in the ministry?"

"Not yet, I think. More likely he has been speculating on the Bourse, and has lost money."

"M. and Madame de Villefort!" cried Baptistin.

They entered. M. de Villefort, notwithstanding his self-control, was visibly affected; and when Monte-Cristo touched his hand, he felt it tremble.

"Certainly, women alone know how to dissimulate," said Monte-Cristo to himself, glancing at Madame Danglars, who was smiling on the procureur du roi and embracing his wife. After a short time the count saw Bertuccio, who,

until then, had been occupied on the other side of the house, glide into an adjoining room. He went to him.

"What do you want, M. Bertuccio?" said he.

"Your excellency has not stated the number of guests."

"Ah, true!"

"How many covers?"

"Count for yourself."

"Is every one here, your excellency?"

"Yes."

Bertuccio glanced through the door, which was ajar. The count watched him.

"Good heavens!" he exclaimed.

"What is the matter?" said the count.

"That woman! — that woman!"

"Which?"

"The one with the white dress and so many diamonds — the fair one."

"Madame Danglars?"

"I do not know her name — but it is she, — sir, it is she!"

"Whom do you mean?"

"The woman in the garden! — she that was *enceinte* — she who was walking while she waited for ——"

Bertuccio stood at the open door with his eyes starting and his hair on end.

"Waiting for whom?"

Bertuccio, without answering, pointed to Villefort with something of the gesture Macbeth uses to point out Banquo.

"Oh! oh!" he at length muttered, "do you see?"

"What? — Whom?"

"Him!"

"Him? — M. de Villefort, the procureur du roi. Certainly, I see him."

"Then I did not kill him!"

"Really, I think you are going mad, good Bertuccio," said the count.

"Then he is not dead?"

"No; you see plainly he is not dead; instead of striking between the sixth and seventh left rib, as your countrymen do, you must have struck higher or lower; and life is very tenacious in these lawyers; or rather, there is no truth in anything you have told me; it was a flight of the imagination — a dream of your fancy. You went to sleep full of thoughts of vengeance; they weighed heavily upon your stomach; you had the nightmare — that's all. Come, calm yourself, and reckon: M. and Madame de Villefort, two; M. and Madame Danglars, four; M. de Château-Renaud, M. Debray, M. Morrel, seven; Major Bartolomeo Cavalcanti, eight."

"Eight!" repeated Bertuccio.

"Stop! You are in a shocking hurry to be off — you forget one of my guests. Lean a little to the left. Stay! look at M. Andrea Cavalcanti — that young man, in a black coat, looking at Murillo's Madonna; now he is turning."

This time Bertuccio would have uttered an exclamation had not a look from Monte-Cristo silenced him.

"Benedetto!" he muttered; "fatality!"

"Half-past six o'clock has just struck, M. Bertuccio," said the count, severely; "I ordered dinner at that hour, and I do not like to wait;" and he returned to his guests; while Bertuccio, leaning against the wall, succeeded in reaching the dining-room. Five minutes afterward, the doors of the drawing-room were thrown open, and Bertuccio, appearing, said, with a violent effort:

"The dinner waits."

The Count of Monte-Cristo offered his arm to Madame de Villefort.

"M. de Villefort," he said, "will you conduct the Baroness Danglars?"

Villefort complied, and they passed on to the dining-room.

CHAPTER LXIII.

THE DINNER.

It was evident that one sentiment pervaded the whole of the guests on entering the dining-room. Each one asked himself what strange influence had conducted them to this house; and yet, astonished, even uneasy though they were, they still felt they would not like to be absent.

The recent events, the solitary and eccentric position of the count; his enormous, nay, almost incredible, fortune, should have made men cautious, and have altogether prevented ladies visiting a house where there was no one of their own sex to receive them; and yet both had passed the bounds of prudence and decorum. Stimulated by an invincible curiosity, there were none present, even including Cavalcanti and his son, notwithstanding the stiffness of the one and carelessness of the other, who were not thoughtful, on finding themselves assembled at the house of this incomprehensible man.

Madame Danglars had started when Villefort, on the count's invitation, offered his arm; and Villefort felt that his glance was uneasy, beneath his gold spectacles, when he felt the arm of the baroness press upon his own. None of this had escaped the count, and even by this mere contact of individuals the scene had already acquired considerable interest for an observer.

M. de Villefort had on the right hand Madame Danglars, on his left Morrel. The count was seated between Madame de Villefort and Danglars; the other seats were filled by Debray, who was placed between the two Caval-

canti, and by Château-Renaud, seated between Madame de Villefort and Morrel.

The repast was magnificent; Monte-Cristo had endeavored completely to overturn the Parisian ideas, and to feed the curiosity as much as the appetite of his guests. It was an Oriental feast that he offered to them, but of such a kind as the Arabian fairies might be supposed to prepare. Every delicious fruit that the four quarters of the globe could provide was heaped in vases from China and jars from Japan. Rare birds, retaining their most brilliant plumage, enormous fish, spread upon massive silver dishes; together with every wine produced in the Archipelago, Asia Minor, or the Cape, sparkling in bottles whose grotesque shape seemed to give an additional flavor to the wine—all these, like one of those displays with which Apicius of old gratified his guests, passed in review before the eyes of the astonished Parisians, who understood that it was possible to expend 25,000 francs upon a dinner for ten persons, but only on the condition of eating pearls like Cleopatra, or drinking beaten gold like Lorenzo di Medici. Monte-Cristo noticed the general astonishment, and began laughing and joking about it.

"Gentlemen," he said, "you will admit that, when arrived at a certain degree of fortune, the superfluities of life are all that can be desired; and the ladies will allow, that, after having risen to a certain eminence of position, the ideal alone can be more exalted. Now to follow out this reasoning: what is the marvellous?—that which we do not understand. What is it that we really desire?—that which we cannot obtain. Now, to see things which I cannot understand, to procure impossibilities, these are the study of my life. I gratify my wishes by two means—my will and my money. I take as much interest in the pursuit of some whim as you do, M. Danglars, in forming a new railway line; you, M. de Villefort, in condemning a culprit to death; you, M. Debray,

in pacifying a kingdom; you, M. de Château-Renaud, in pleasing a woman; and you, Morrel, in breaking a horse that no one can ride. For example, you see these two fish; one brought fifty leagues from beyond St. Petersburg, the other five leagues from Naples. Is it not amusing to see them both on the table?"

"What are the two fish?" asked Danglars.

"M. Château-Renaud, who has lived in Russia, will tell you the name of one, and Major Cavalcanti, who is an Italian, will tell you the name of the other."

"This one is, I think, a sterlet," said Château-Renaud.

"And that one, if I mistake not, a lamprey."

"Just so. Now, M. Danglars, ask these gentlemen where they are caught."

"Sterlets," said Château-Renaud, "are only found in the Volga."

"And," said Cavalcanti, "I know that Lake Fusaro alone supplies lampreys of that size."

"Exactly; one comes from the Volga, and the other from Lake Fusaro."

"Impossible!" cried all the guests, simultaneously.

"Well, this is just what amuses me," said Monte-Cristo. "I am like Nero — *cupitor impossibilium*; and that it is which is amusing you at this moment. This fish, which seems so exquisite to you, is, very likely, no better than perch or salmon; but it seems impossible to procure it, and here it is."

"But how could you have these fish brought to France?"

"Oh! nothing more easy. Each fish was brought over in a cask, one filled with river herbs and weeds, the other with rushes and lake plants; they were placed in a wagon built on purpose; and thus the sterlet lived twelve days, the lamprey eight; and both were alive when my cook seized them, killing one with milk and the other with wine. You do not believe me, M. Danglars?"

"I cannot help doubting," answered Danglars, with his stupid smile.

"Baptistin," said the count, "have the other fish brought in — the sterlet and the lamprey which came in the other cask, and which are yet alive."

Danglars opened his bewildered eyes; the company clapped their hands. Four servants carried in two casks covered with aquatic plants, in each of which was breathing a fish similar to those on the table.

"But why have two of each sort?" asked Danglars.

"Because one might have died," carelessly answered Monte-Cristo.

"You are certainly an extraordinary man," said Danglars; "and philosophers may well say it is a fine thing to be rich."

"And to have ideas," added Madame Danglars.

"Oh! do not give me credit for it, madame; it was done by the Romans, who much esteemed them; and Pliny relates that they sent slaves from Ostia to Rome, who carried on their heads fish which he calls the *mulus*, and which, from the description, must probably be the gold fish. It was also considered a luxury to have them alive, it being an amusing sight to see them die; for, when dying, they change color three or four times, and, like the rainbow when it disappears, pass through all the prismatic shades: after which they were sent to the kitchen. Their agony formed part of their merit; if they were not seen alive, they were despised when dead."

"Yes," said Debray; "but then Ostia is only a few leagues from Rome."

"True," said Monte-Cristo; "but what would be the use of living 1,800 years after Lucullus, if we can do no better than he could?"

The two Cavalcanti opened their enormous eyes, but had the good sense not to say anything.

"All this is very extraordinary," said Château-Renaud; "still, what I admire the most, I confess, is the marvellous promptitude with which your orders are executed. Is it

not true that you only bought this house five or six days ago?"

"Certainly not longer."

"Well! I am sure it is quite transformed since last week. If I remember rightly, it had another entrance, and the courtyard was paved and empty; while, to-day, we have a splendid lawn, bordered by trees which appear to be a hundred years old."

"Why not? I am fond of grass and shade," said Monte-Cristo.

"Yes," said Madame de Villefort, "the door was towards the road before; and on the day of my miraculous escape you brought me into the house from the road, I remember."

"Yes, madame," said Monte-Cristo; "but I prefer having an entrance which would allow me to see the Bois de Boulogne over my gate."

"In four days!" said Morrel; "it is extraordinary!"

"Indeed!" said Château-Renaud, "it seems quite miraculous to make a new house out of an old one; for it was very old and dull, too. I recollect coming for my mother to look at it when M. de Saint-Meran advertised it for sale two or three years ago."

"M. de Saint-Meran!" said Madame de Villefort; "then this house belonged to M. de Saint-Meran before you bought it?"

"It appears so," replied Monte-Cristo.

"How, do you not know of whom you purchased it?"

"No, indeed; my steward transacts all this business for me."

"It is certainly ten years since the house has been occupied," said Château-Renaud; "and it was quite melancholy to look at it, with the blinds closed, the doors locked, and the weeds in the court. Really, if the house had not belonged to the father-in-law of the procureur du roi, one might have thought it some accursed place where a horrible crime had been committed."

Villefort, who had hitherto not tasted the three or four glasses of rare wine which were placed before him, here took one, and drank it off. Monte-Cristo allowed a short time to elapse, and then said :

"It is singular, baron, but the same idea came across me the first time I entered it; it looked so gloomy I should never have bought it if my steward had not acted for me. Perhaps the fellow had been bribed by the notary."

"It is probable," stammered out De Villefort; "but, believe me, I have nothing to do with this corruption. This house is part of the marriage-portion of Valentine, and M. de Saint-Meran wished to sell it, for, if it had remained another year or two uninhabited, it would have fallen to ruin."

It was Morrel's turn to become pale.

"There was, above all, one room," continued Monte-Cristo, "very plain in appearance, hung with red damask, which, I know not why, appeared to me quite dramatic."

"Why so?" said Danglars. "Why dramatic?"

"Can we account for instinct?" said Monte-Cristo. "Are there not some places where we seem to breathe sadness — why, we cannot tell? It is a chain of recollections; an idea which carries you back to other times — to other places — which, very likely, have no connection with the present time and place. And there is something in this room which reminds me forcibly of the chamber of the Marchioness de Gange or Desdemona. Stay, since we have finished dinner, I will show it to you, and then we will take coffee in the garden. After dinner the play."

Monte-Cristo looked inquiringly at his guests; Madame de Villefort rose, Monte-Cristo did the same, and the rest followed their example. Villefort and Madame Danglars remained for a moment as if rooted to their seats; they interrogated each other with cold glazed eyes.

"Did you hear?" said Madame Danglars.

"We must go," replied Villefort, offering his arm.

Every one else was already scattered in different parts of the house, urged by curiosity, for they thought the visit would not be limited to the one room, and that, at the same time, they would obtain a view of the rest of the building, of which Monte-Cristo had created a palace. Each one went out by the open doors. Monte-Cristo waited for the two who remained; then, when they had passed, he closed the march with a smile, which, if they could have understood it, would have alarmed them much more than a visit to the room they were about to enter.

They, therefore, began by walking through the apartments, many of which were fitted up in the Eastern style, with cushions and divans instead of beds, and pipes instead of furniture. The drawing-rooms were decorated with the rarest pictures by the old masters, the boudoirs hung with draperies from China, of fanciful colors, fantastic designs, and wonderful texture. At length they arrived at the famous room. There was nothing particular about it, excepting that, although daylight had disappeared, it was not lighted, and everything in it remained antique, while the rest of the rooms had been redecorated. These two causes were enough to give it a gloomy tinge.

"Oh!" cried Madame de Villefort, "it is really frightful."

Madame Danglars tried to utter a few words, but was not heard. Many observations were made, the result of which was the unanimous opinion that there was a sinister appearance in the room.

"Is it not so?" asked Monte-Cristo. "Look at that large, clumsy bed, hung with such gloomy, blood-colored drapery! And those two crayon portraits, that have faded from the damp, do not they seem to say, with their pale lips and staring eyes, 'We have seen'?"

Villefort became livid; Madame Danglars fell into a long seat placed near the chimney.

"Oh!" said Madame de Villefort, smiling, "are you

courageous enough to sit down upon the very seat, perhaps, upon which the crime was committed?"

Madame Danglars rose suddenly.

"And then," said Monte-Cristo, "this is not all."

"What is there more?" said Debray, who had not failed to notice the agitation of Madame Danglars.

"Ah! what else is there?" said Danglars, "for, at present, I cannot say that I have seen anything extraordinary. What do you say, M. Cavalcanti?"

"Ah!" said he, "we have at Pisa the tower of Ugolino; at Ferrara, the prison of Tasso; at Rimini, the room of Francesca and Paolo."

"Yes, but you have not this little staircase," said Monte-Cristo, opening a door concealed by the drapery. "Look at it, and tell me what you think of it."

"What a wicked-looking, crooked staircase!" said Châteaurenault, smiling.

"I do not know whether the wine of Chios produces melancholy, but certainly everything appears to me black in this house," said Debray.

Ever since Valentine's dowry had been mentioned, Morrel had been silent and sad.

"Can you not imagine," said Monte-Cristo, "some Othello or Abbé de Ganges, one stormy, dark night, descending these stairs step by step, carrying a heavy load, which he wishes to hide from the sight of man, if not from God?"

Madame Danglars half fainted on the arm of Villefort, who was obliged to support himself against the wall.

"Ah, madame," cried Debray, "what is the matter with you? how pale you look!"

"This is what is the matter with her," said Madame de Villefort; "it is very simple: M. de Monte-Cristo is relating horrible stories to us, doubtless intending to frighten us to death."

"Yes," said Villefort, "really, count, you frighten the ladies."

"What is the matter?" asked Debray, in a whisper, of Madame Danglars.

"Nothing," she replied, with a violent effort. "I want air, that is all."

"Will you come into the garden?" said Debray, advancing towards the back staircase.

"No, no," she answered, "I would rather remain here."

"Are you really frightened, madame?" said Monte-Cristo.

"Oh, no, sir," said Madame Danglars; "but you suppose scenes in a manner which gives them the appearance of reality."

"Ah, yes," said Monte-Cristo, smiling; "it is all a matter of the imagination. Why should we not imagine this the apartment of an honest family woman? And this bed with red hangings, a bed visited by the goddess Lucina? And that mysterious staircase, the passage through which, not to disturb their sleep, the doctor and nurse pass, or even the father carrying the sleeping child?"

Here Madame Danglars, instead of being calmed by this soft picture, uttered a groan and fainted.

"Madame Danglars is ill," said Villefort; "it would be better to take her to her carriage."

"Oh! and I have forgotten my smelling-bottle!" said Monte-Cristo.

"I have mine," said Madame de Villefort; and she passed over to Monte-Cristo a bottle full of the same kind of red liquid whose good properties the count had tested on Edward.

"Ah!" said Monte-Cristo, taking it from her hand.

"Yes," she said, "at your advice I have tried."

"And have you succeeded?"

"I think so."

Madame Danglars was carried into the adjoining room: Monte-Cristo dropped a very small portion of the red liquid upon her lips; she returned to consciousness.

"Ah!" she cried, "what a frightful dream."

Villefort pressed her hand to let her know it was not a dream.

M. Danglars was sought, but, little interested in poetical ideas, he had gone into the garden, and was talking with Major Cavalcanti on the projected railway from Leghorn to Florence.

Monte-Cristo seemed in despair. He took the arm of Madame Danglars and conducted her into the garden, where they found Danglars taking coffee between the Cavalcanti.

"Really, madame," he said, "did I alarm you much?"

"Oh, no, sir," she answered; "but you know, things impress us differently according to the mood of our minds."

Villefort forced a laugh.

"And then, you know," he said, "an idea, a supposition, is sufficient."

"Well," said Monte-Cristo, "you may believe me, if you like, but it is my belief that a crime has been committed in this house."

"Take care," said Madame de Villefort, "the procureur du roi is here."

"Ah!" replied Monte-Cristo, "since that is the case, I will take advantage of his presence to make my declaration."

"Your declaration!" said Villefort.

"Yes, before witnesses."

"Oh, this is very interesting," said Debray; "if there really has been a crime, we will investigate it."

"There has been a crime," said Monte-Cristo. "Come this way, gentlemen; come, M. Villefort, for a declaration, to be available, should be made before the competent authorities."

He then took Villefort's arm, and, at the same time, holding that of Madame Danglars under his own, he dragged the procureur to the plantain-tree, where the shade was thickest. All the other guests followed.

"Stay," said Monte-Cristo, "here, in this very spot" (and

he stamped upon the ground), "I had the earth dug up and fresh mould put in, to refresh these old trees; well, my man, digging, found a box, or rather the iron-work of a box, in the midst of which was a skeleton of a newly born infant."

Monte-Cristo felt the arm of Madame Danglars stiffen, while that of Villefort trembled.

"A newly born infant!" repeated Debray; "this affair becomes serious."

"Well," said Château-Renaud, "I was not wrong just now, then, when I said that houses had souls and faces like men, and that their exteriors carried the impress of their characters. This house was gloomy because it was remorseful; it was remorseful because it concealed a crime."

"Who said it was crime?" asked Villefort, with a last effort.

"How? Is it not a crime to bury a living child in a garden?" cried Monte-Cristo. "And pray what do you call such an action?"

"But who said it was buried alive?"

"Why bury it there if it were dead? This garden has never been a cemetery."

"What is done to infanticides in this country?" asked Major Cavalcanti, innocently.

"Oh, their heads are soon cut off," said Danglars.

"Ah, indeed!" said Cavalcanti.

"I think so. Am I not right, M. de Villefort?" asked Monte-Cristo.

"Yes, count," replied M. de Villefort, in a voice now scarcely human.

Monte-Cristo saw that the two persons for whom he had prepared this scene could scarcely bear it, so, not wishing to carry it too far, he said:

"Come, gentlemen, some coffee; we seem to have forgotten it," and he conducted the guests back to the table in the lawn

tion the hospitality of the count, made up his mind that he was in the society of some nabob come to Paris to finish the worldly education of his only son. He contemplated with unspeakable delight the large diamond which shone on the major's little finger; for the major, like a prudent man, in case of any accident happening to his bank-notes, had immediately converted them into articles of value. Then after dinner, on the pretext of business, he questioned the father and son upon their mode of living; and the father and son, previously informed that it was through Danglars the one was to receive his 48,000 francs, and the other his 50,000 livres, annually, were so full of affability, that they would have shaken hands even with the banker's servants, so much did their gratitude need an object to expend itself upon. One thing above all the rest heightened the respect, nay, almost the veneration, of Danglars for Cavalcanti. The latter, faithful to the principle of Horace, *nîl admirari*, had contented himself in proving his knowledge by saying in what lake the best lampreys were caught. Then he had eaten some without saying a word; Danglars, therefore, concluded that these kinds of luxuries were common at the table of the illustrious descendant of the Cavalcanti, who most likely in Lucca fed upon trout brought from Switzerland, and lobsters sent from England, by the same means used by the count to bring the lampreys from the Lake Fusaro, and the sterlet from the Volga. Thus it was with much politeness of manner that he heard Cavalcanti pronounce these words:

"To-morrow, sir, I shall have the honor of waiting upon you on business."

"And I, sir," said Danglars, "shall be most happy to receive you." Upon which he offered to take Cavalcanti in his carriage to the Hôtel des Princes, if it would not be depriving him of the company of his son. To this Cavalcanti replied by saying that for some time past his son had lived independently of him; that he had his own horses and carriages, and that not having come together,

it would not be difficult for them to leave separately. The major seated himself, therefore, by the side of Danglars, who was more and more charmed with the ideas and order and economy which ruled this man, and yet who, being able to allow his son 50,000 francs a year, might be supposed to possess a fortune of 500,000 or 600,000 livres.

As for Andrea, he began, by way of showing off, to scold his groom, who, instead of bringing the tilbury to the steps of the house, had taken it to the outer door, thus giving him the trouble of walking thirty steps to reach it. The groom heard him with humility, took the bit of the impatient animal with his left hand, and with the right held out the reins to Andrea, who, taking them from him, rested his polished boot lightly on the step. At that moment a hand touched his shoulder. The young man turned around, thinking that Danglars or Monte-Cristo had forgotten something they wished to tell him, and had returned just as they were starting. But, instead of either of these, he saw nothing but a strange face, sunburnt, and encircled by a beard, with eyes brilliant as carbuncles, and a smile upon the mouth which displayed a perfect set of white teeth, pointed and sharp as the wolf's or jackal's. A red handkerchief encircled his gray head; torn and filthy garments covered his large bony limbs, which seemed as though, like those of a skeleton, they would rattle as he walked; and the hand with which he leaned upon the young man's shoulder, and which was the first thing Andrea saw, seemed of a gigantic size.

Did the young man recognize that face by the light of the lantern in his tilbury, or was he merely struck with the horrible appearance of his interrogator? We cannot say; but only relate the fact that he shuddered and stepped back suddenly.

"What do you want of me?" he asked.

"Pardon me, my friend, if I disturb you," said the man with the red handkerchief, "but I want to speak to you."

"You have no right to beg at night," said the groom, endeavoring to rid his master of the troublesome intruder.

"I am not begging, my fine fellow," said the unknown, to the servant, with so ironical an expression of eye, and so frightful a smile, that he withdrew; "I only wish to say two or three words to your master, who gave me a commission to execute about a fortnight ago."

"Come," said Andrea, with sufficient nerve for his servant not to perceive his agitation, "what do you want? Speak quickly, friend."

The man said in a low voice:

"I wish—I wish you to spare me the walk back to Paris. I am very tired, and not having eaten so good a dinner as you have, I can scarcely support myself."

The young man shuddered at this strange familiarity.

"Tell me," said he; "tell me what you want?"

"Well, then, I want you to take me up in your fine carriage, and carry me back."

Andrea turned pale, but said nothing.

"Yes!" said the man, thrusting his hands into his pockets, and looking impudently at the youth: "I have taken the whim into my head; do you understand, Master Benedetto?"

At this name the young man no doubt reflected a little, for he went towards his groom, saying:

"This man is right; I did indeed charge him with a commission, the result of which he must tell me; walk to the barrier, there take a cab, that you may not be too late."

The surprised groom retired.

"Let me, at least, reach a shady spot," said Andrea.

"Oh! as for that, I'll conduct you to a splendid spot," said the man with the handkerchief; and, taking the horse's bit, he led the tilbury to a place where it was certainly impossible for any one to witness the honor that Andrea conferred upon him.

"Don't think I want the honor of riding in your fine

carriage," said he; "oh, no, it's only because I'm tired, and also because I have a little business to talk over with you."

"Come, step in," said the young man.

It was a pity that this scene had not occurred in daylight, for it was curious to see this rascal throwing himself heavily down on the cushion beside the young and elegant driver of the tilbury.

Andrea drove past the last house in the village, without saying a word to his companion, who smiled complacently, as though well pleased to find himself travelling in so comfortable a vehicle. Once out of Auteuil, Andrea looked around, in order to assure himself that he could neither be seen nor heard; and then, stopping his horse and crossing his arms before the man, he asked:

"Now! tell me why you come to disturb my tranquillity?"

"Let me ask you why you deceived me?"

"How have I deceived you?"

"How! do you ask? when we parted at the Pont du Far, you told me you were going to travel through Piedmont and Tuscany; but instead of that, you come to Paris."

"How does that annoy you?"

"It does not; on the contrary, I think it will answer my purpose."

"So," said Andrea, "you are speculating upon me?"

"What fine words he uses!"

"I warn you, Master Caderousse, that you are mistaken."

"Well, well, don't be angry, my boy; you know well enough what it is to be unfortunate; and misfortune makes us jealous. I thought you were earning a living in Tuscany or Piedmont by acting as *facchino* or *cicerone*; and I pitied you sincerely, as I would a child of my own. You know I always did call you my child?"

"Come, come, what then?"

"Patience! patience!"

"I am patient, but go on."

"All at once I see you pass through the barrier with a groom, a tilbury, and fine new clothes. You must have discovered a mine, or else become a stock-broker."

"So that, as you acknowledge, you are jealous?"

"No, I am pleased — so pleased that I wish to congratulate you, but as I am not properly dressed, I chose my opportunity, that I might not compromise you."

"Yes, and a fine opportunity you have chosen!" exclaimed Andrea; "you speak to me before my servant."

"How can I help that, my boy? I speak to you when I can catch you. You have a quick horse, a light tilbury, you are naturally as slippery as an eel; had I missed you to-night, I might not have had another chance."

"You see I do not conceal myself."

"You are lucky; I wish I could say as much. I do conceal myself, and then I was afraid you would not recognize me, but you did," added Caderousse, with his unpleasant smile; "it was very polite of you."

"Come," said Andrea, "what do you want?"

"You do not speak affectionately to me, Benedetto, my old friend, that is not right; take care, or I may become troublesome."

This menace smothered the young man's passion. He trotted his horse on.

"You should not speak so to an old friend like me, Caderousse, as you said just now; you are a native of Marseilles, I am ——"

"Do you know, then, now what you are?"

"No; but I was brought up in Corsica; you are old and obstinate, I am young and wilful. Between folks like us threats are out of place; everything should be amicably arranged. Is it my fault if Fortune, which has frowned on you, has been kind to me?"

"Fortune has been kind to you then? Your tilbury, your groom, your clothes are not, then, hired? Good, so

much the better," said Caderousse, his eyes sparkling with avarice.

"Oh! you knew that well enough before speaking to me," said Andrea, becoming more and more excited. "If I had been wearing a handkerchief like yours on my head, rags on my back, and worn-out shoes on my feet, you would not have known me."

"You wrong me, my boy; now I have found you, nothing prevents my being as well dressed as any one, knowing as I do the goodness of your heart. If you have two coats, you will give me one of them. I used to divide my soup and beans with you when you were hungry."

"True," said Andrea.

"What an appetite you used to have! is it as good now?"

"Oh, yes," replied Andrea, laughing.

"How did you come to be dining with that prince whose house you have just left?"

"He is not a prince; simply a count."

"A count, and a rich one, too, eh?"

"Yes; but you had better not have anything to say to him, for he is not a very good-tempered gentleman."

"Oh, be satisfied! I have no design upon your count, and you shall have him all to yourself. But," said Caderousse, again smiling with the disagreeable expression he had before assumed, "you must pay for it—you understand?"

"Well, what do you want?"

"I think that with a hundred francs per month——"

"Well?"

"I could live——"

"Upon a hundred francs!"

"Come—you understand me; but that with——"

"With?"

"With a hundred and fifty francs I should be quite happy."

"Here are two hundred," said Andrea; and he placed ten louis d'or in the hand of Caderousse.

"Good!" said Caderousse.

"Apply to the steward on the first day of every month and you will receive the same sum."

"There now, again, you degrade me."

"How so?"

"By making me apply to the servants, when I want to transact business with you alone."

"Well, be it so then. Take it from me, then, and so long at least as I receive my income, you shall be paid yours."

"Come, come; I always said you were a fine fellow, and it is a blessing when good fortune happens to such as you. But tell me all about it."

"What do you wish to know?" asked Cavalcanti.

"What! do you again defy me?"

"No; the fact is, I have found my father."

"What! a real father?"

"Yes; so long as he pays me ——"

"You'll honor and believe him — that's right. What is his name?"

"Major Cavalcanti."

"Is he pleased with you?"

"So far as I have appeared to answer his purpose."

"And who found this father for you?"

"The Count of Monte-Cristo."

"The man whose house you have just left?"

"Yes."

"I wish you would try and find me a situation with him as grandfather, since he holds the money-chest."

"Well, I will mention you to him. Meanwhile, what are you going to do?"

"I?"

"Yes, you."

"It is very kind of you to trouble yourself about me."

"Since you interest yourself in my affairs, I think it is now my turn to ask you some questions."

"Ah, true! Well, I shall rent a room in some respectable house, wear a decent coat, shave every day, and go and read the papers in a café. Then, in the evening, I will go to the theatre; I shall look like some retired baker. This is my wish."

"Come, if you will only put this scheme into execution, and be steady, nothing could be better."

"Do you think so, M. Bossuet? And you — what will you become? A peer of France?"

"Ah!" said Andrea, "who knows?"

"Major Cavalcanti is already one, perhaps; but, then, hereditary rank is abolished."

"No politics, Caderousse! And now that you have all you want, and that we understand each other, jump down from the tilbury, and disappear."

"Not at all, my good friend."

"How! not at all?"

"Why, just think for a moment; with this red handkerchief on my head, with scarcely any shoes, no papers, and ten gold napoleons in my pocket, without reckoning what was there before — making in all about two hundred francs, why, I should certainly be arrested at the barrier! Then, to justify myself, I should say that you gave me the money; this would cause inquiries; it would be found that I left Toulon without giving due notice, and I should then be reconducted to the shores of the Mediterranean. Then I should become simply No. 106, and good-bye to my dream of resembling the retired baker. No, no, my boy; I prefer remaining honorably in the capital."

Andrea scowled. Certainly, as he himself owned, the reputed son of Major Cavalcanti was a wilful fellow. He drew up for a minute, threw a rapid glance around him; and, after doing so, his hand fell instantly into his pocket, where it begun playing with a pistol. But meanwhile Caderousse, who had never taken his eyes off his compan-

ion, passed his hand behind his back, and unclasped a long Spanish knife, which he always carried with him, to be ready in case of need. The two friends, as we see, were worthy of and understood one another. Andrea's hand left his pocket inoffensively, and was carried up to the red moustache, which it played with for some time.

"Good Caderousse," he said, "how happy you will be!"

"I will do my best," said the innkeeper of the Pont du Gard, reclasping his knife.

"Well, then, we will go into Paris. But how will you pass through the barrier without exciting suspicion? It seems to me that you are in more danger riding than on foot."

"Wait," said Caderousse, "you shall see." He then took the great-coat with the large collar, which the groom had left behind in the tilbury, and put it on his back; then he took off Cavalcanti's hat, which he placed upon his own head; and finally assumed the careless attitude of a servant whose master drives himself.

"But tell me," said Andrea, "am I to remain bare-headed?"

"Pooh!" said Caderousse; "it is so windy that your hat can easily appear to have blown off."

"Come, come; enough of this," said Cavalcanti.

"What are you waiting for?" said Caderousse. "I hope I am not the cause?"

"Chut!" exclaimed Andrea.

They passed the barrier without accident. At the first cross street Andrea stopped his horse, and Caderousse leaped out.

"Well!" said Andrea, "my servant's coat and my hat?"

"Ah!" said Caderousse; "you would not like me to risk taking cold?"

"But what am I to do?"

"You? oh, you are young, whilst I am beginning to get

old. *Au revoir*, Benedetto;" and, running into a court, he disappeared.

"Alas!" said Andrea, sighing; "one cannot be completely happy in this world."

CHAPTER LXV.

A CONJUGAL SCENE.

AT the Place Louis XV., the three young people separated — that is to say, Morrel went to the Boulevards, Château-Renaud to the Pont de la Revolution, and Debray to the Quai. Most probably Morrel and Château-Renaud returned to their “domestic hearths,” as they say in the gallery of the Chambers in well-turned speeches, and in the theatre of the Rue Richelieu in well-written pieces; but it was not the case with Debray. When he reached the wicket of the Louvre, he turned to the left, galloped across the Carrousel, passed through the Rue Saint Roch, and, issuing from the Rue de la Michodiere, he arrived at M. Danglars’s door just at the same time that Villefort’s landau, after having deposited him and his wife at the Faubourg Saint Honore, stopped to leave the baroness at her own house. Debray, with the air of a man familiar with the house, entered first into the court, threw his bridle into the hands of a footman, and returned to the door to receive Madame Danglars, to whom he offered his arm, to conduct her to her apartments. The gate once closed, and Debray and the baroness alone in the court, he asked :

“What was the matter with you, Hermine ? and why were you so affected at that story, or rather fable, which the count related ? ”

“Because I have been in such shocking spirits all the evening, my friend,” said the baroness.

“No, Hermine,” replied Debray, “you cannot make me believe that; on the contrary, you were in excellent spirits

when you arrived at the count's. M. Danglars was disagreeable, certainly; but I know how much you care for his ill-humor. Some one has vexed you; I will allow no one to annoy you."

"You are deceived, Lucien, I assure you," replied Madame Danglars; "and what I have told you is really the case, added to the ill-humor you remarked, but which I did not think it worth while to allude to."

It was evident that Madame Danglars was suffering from that nervous irritability which women frequently cannot account for even to themselves, or that, as Debray had guessed, she had experienced some secret agitation that she would not acknowledge to any one. Being a man who knew that the former of these symptoms was one of the elements of female life, he did not then press his inquiries, but waited for a more appropriate opportunity, when he should again interrogate her, or receive an avowal *proprio motu*.

At the door of her apartment the baroness met Mademoiselle Cornelia, her confidential lady's-maid.

"What is my daughter doing?" asked Madame Danglars.

"She practised all the evening, and then went to bed," replied Mademoiselle Cornelia.

"Yet I think I heard her piano."

"It is Mademoiselle Louise d'Armilly who is playing, while Mademoiselle Danglars is in bed."

"Well," said Madame Danglars, "come and undress me."

They entered the bedroom. Debray stretched himself upon a large couch, and Madame Danglars passed into her dressing-room with Mademoiselle Cornelia.

"My dear M. Lucien," said Madame Danglars, through the door, "you are always complaining that Eugenie will not address a single word to you."

"Madame," said Lucien, playing with a little dog, who, recognizing him as a friend of the house, expected to be caressed, "I am not the only one who makes similar com-

plaints; I think I heard Morcerf say that he could not extract a word from his *fiancée*."

"True," said Madame Danglars, "but yet I think this will all pass off, and that you will one day see her enter your study."

"My study?"

"At least that of the minister."

"Why so?"

"To ask for an engagement at the opera. Really, I never saw such an infatuation for music; it is quite ridiculous for a young lady of fashion."

Debray smiled.

"Well," said he, "let her come, with your consent and that of the baron, and we will try and give her an engagement, though we are very poor to pay such talent as hers."

"Go, Cornélie," said Madame Danglars: "I do not require you any longer."

Cornélie obeyed, and the next minute Madame Danglars left her room in a charming loose dress, and came and sat down close to Debray. Then, thoughtful, she began to caress the little spaniel. Lucien looked at her for a moment in silence.

"Come, Hermine," he said, after a short time, "answer candidly: something vexes you — is it not so?"

"Nothing," answered the baroness.

And yet as she could scarcely breathe, she rose and went toward a looking-glass.

"I am frightful to-night," she said.

Debray rose, smiling, and was about to contradict the baroness upon this latter point, when the door opened suddenly. M. Danglars appeared. Debray reseated himself. At the noise of the door Madame Danglars turned around, and looked upon her husband with an astonishment she took no trouble to conceal.

"Good evening, madame!" said the banker; "good evening, M. Debray!"

Probably the baroness thought this unexpected visit sig-

nified a desire to repair the sharp words he had uttered during the day. Assuming a dignified air, she turned around to Debray, without answering her husband. "Read me something, M. Debray," she said.

Debray, who was slightly disturbed at this visit, recovered himself when he saw the calmness of the baroness, and took up a book marked by a mother-of-pearl knife, inlaid with gold.

"Excuse me," said the banker, "but you will tire yourself, baroness, by such late hours, and M. Debray lives some distance from here."

Debray was petrified, not only to hear Danglars speak so calmly and politely, but that it was apparent that beneath this forced appearance there really lurked a determined spirit of opposition to anything his wife wished that evening. The baroness was also surprised, and showed her astonishment by a look which would doubtless have had some effect upon her husband if he had not been intently occupied with the paper, where he was seeking the closing price of the funds. The result was that the proud look entirely failed.

"M. Lucien," said the baroness, "I assure you I have no desire to sleep, and that I have a thousand things to tell you this evening, which you must listen to, even though you slept while hearing me."

"I am at your service, madame," replied Lucien, coldly.

"My dear M. Debray," said the banker, "do not kill yourself to-night listening to the follies of Madame Danglars, for you can hear them as well to-morrow; but I claim to-night, and will dedicate it, if you will allow me, to talk over some serious matters with my wife."

This time the blow was so well aimed, and hit so directly, that Lucien and the baroness were staggered; and they interrogated each other with their eyes, as if to seek help against this aggression, but the irresistible will of the master of the house prevailed, and the husband was victorious.

"Do not think I wish to turn you out, my dear Debray," continued Danglars — "oh, no! not at all. An unexpected occurrence forces me to ask my wife to have a little conversation with me; it is so rarely I make such a request, I am sure you cannot grudge it to me."

Debray muttered something, bowed, and went out, knocking himself against the edge of the door, like Nathan in "Athalie."

"It is extraordinary," he said, when the door was closed behind him, "how easily these husbands, whom we ridicule, gain an advantage over us."

Lucien having left, Danglars took his place on the sofa, closed the open book, and placing himself in a dreadfully dictatorial attitude, he began playing with the dog; but the animal, not liking him so well as Debray, and attempting to bite him, Danglars seized him by the skin of his neck, and threw him to the other side of the room upon a couch. The animal uttered a cry during its transit, but, arrived at its destination, it crouched behind the cushions, and, stupefied at such unusual treatment, remained silent and motionless.

"Do you know, sir," asked the baroness, "that you are improving? Generally, you are only rude, but to-night you are brutal."

"It is because I am in a worse humor than usual," replied Danglars.

Hermine looked at the banker with supreme disdain. These glances frequently exasperated the pride of Danglars, but this evening he took no notice of them.

"And what have I to do with your ill-humor?" said the baroness, irritated at the impassibility of her husband; "do these things concern me? Keep your ill-humor at home in your chests, or, since you have clerks whom you pay, vent it upon them."

"Not so," replied Danglars; "your advice is wrong, so I shall not follow it. My chests are my Pactolus, as, I think, M. Demoustier says, and I will not retard its course,

or disturb its calm. My clerks are honest men, who earn my fortune, whom I pay much below their deserts, if I may value them according to what they bring in; therefore, I shall not get into a passion with them; those with whom I will be in a passion are those who eat my dinners, mount my horses, and exhaust my fortune."

"And pray who are the persons who exhaust your fortune? Explain yourself more clearly, I beg, sir."

"Oh, make yourself easy!—I am not speaking riddles, and you will soon know what I mean. The people who exhaust my fortune are those who draw out 700,000 francs in the course of an hour."

"I do not understand you, sir," said the baroness, trying to disguise the agitation of her voice and the flush of her face.

"You understand me perfectly, on the contrary," said Danglars; "but, if you will persist, I will tell you that I have just lost 700,000 francs upon the Spanish loan."

"And pray," asked the baroness, "am I responsible for this loss?"

"Why not?"

"Is it my fault you have lost 700,000 francs?"

"Certainly it is not mine."

"Once for all, sir," replied the baroness, sharply, "I tell you I will not hear cash named; it is a style of language I never heard in the house of my parents or in that of my first husband."

"Oh! I can well believe that, for neither of them was worth a penny."

"The better reason for my not being conversant with the slang of the bank, which is here dinning in my ears from morning till night; that noise of crowns jingling, which are constantly being counted and re-counted, is odious to me. I only know one thing I dislike more, which is the sound of your voice."

"Really," said Danglars. "Well, this surprises me, for I thought you took the liveliest interest in my affairs!"

"I! What could put such an idea into your head?"

"Yourself!"

"Ah! — what next?"

"Most assuredly."

"I should like to know upon what occasion?"

"Ah, that is very easily done! Last February you were the first who told me of the Haytien funds. You had dreamed that a ship had entered the harbor of Havre, that this ship brought news that a payment we had looked upon as lost was going to be made. I know how clear-sighted your dreams are; I therefore purchased immediately as many shares as I could of the Haytien debt, and I gained 400,000 francs by it, of which 100,000 have been honestly paid to you. You spent it as you pleased — that was your business. In March there was a question about a grant to a railway. Three companies presented themselves, each offering equal securities. You told me that your instinct — and although you pretended to know nothing about speculations, I think, on the contrary, that your comprehension is very clear upon certain affairs — well, you told me that your instinct led you to believe the grant would be given to the company called the Southern. I bought two-thirds of the shares of that company; as you had foreseen, the shares became of triple value, and I picked up a million, from which 250,000 francs were paid to you for pin-money. How have you spent this 250,000 francs? It is no business of mine."

"When are you coming to the point?" cried the baroness, shivering with anger and impatience.

"Patience, madame, I am coming to it."

"That's fortunate!"

"In April you went to dine at the minister's. You had a private conversation respecting the affairs of Spain — on the expulsion of Don Carlos. I bought some Spanish shares. The expulsion took place and I pocketed 600,000 francs the day Charles V. repassed the Bidassoa. Of these 600,000 francs you took 50,000 crowns. They were yours,

you disposed of them according to your fancy, and I asked no questions; but it is not the less true that you have this year received 500,000 livres."

"Well, sir, and what then?"

"Ah, yes, it was just after this that you spoiled everything!"

"Really, your manner of speaking ——"

"It expresses my meaning, and that is all I want. Well, three days after that you talked politics with M. Debray, and you fancied from his words that Don Carlos had returned to Spain. Well, I sold my shares, the news was spread, and I no longer sold, but gave them: next day I find the news was false, and by this false report I have lost 700,000 francs."

"Well?"

"Well! since I give you a fourth of my gains, I think you owe me a fourth of my losses; the fourth of 700,000 francs is 175,000 francs."

"What you say is absurd, and I cannot see why M. Debray's name is mixed up in this affair."

"Because if you do not possess the 175,000 francs I reclaim, you must have lent them to your friends, and M. Debray is one of your friends."

"For shame!" exclaimed the baroness.

"Oh! let us have no gestures, no screams, no modern drama, or you will oblige me to tell you that I see Debray leave here, pocketing nearly the whole of the 500,000 livres you have handed over to him this year; while he smiles to himself, saying that he has found that which the most skilful players have never discovered; that is, a roulette where he wins without paying, and is no loser when he loses."

The baroness became enraged.

"Wretch!" she cried, "will you dare to tell me you did not know that with which you now reproach me?"

"I do not say that I did know it, and I do not say that I did not know it. I merely tell you to look into my con-

duet during the last four years that we have ceased to be husband and wife, and see whether it has not always been consistent. Some time after our rupture, you wished to study music under the celebrated baritone who made such a successful *début* at the Théâtre Italien; at the same time I felt inclined to learn dancing of the *danseuse* who acquired such a reputation in London. This cost me, on your account and mine, about 100,000 francs. I said nothing, for we must have peace in the house; and 100,000 francs for a lady and gentleman to be properly instructed in music and dancing are not too much. Well, you soon became tired of singing, and you take a fancy to study diplomacy with the minister's secretary. You understand; it signifies nothing to me so long as you pay for your lessons out of your own cash-box. But to-day I find you are drawing on mine, and that your apprenticeship may cost me 700,000 francs per month. Stop there, madame! for this cannot last. Either the diplomatist must give his lessons gratis, and I will tolerate him, or he must never set his foot again in my house; do you understand, madame?"

"Oh! this is too much!" cried Hermine, choking; "you are worse than despicable."

"But," continued Danglars, "I find you did not even pause there——"

"Insults!"

"You are right; let us leave these facts alone, and reason coolly. I have never interfered in your affairs, excepting for your good; treat me in the same way. You say you have nothing to do with my cash-box. Be it so. Do as you like with your own, but do not fill or empty mine. Besides, how do I know that this was not a political trick; that the minister, enraged at seeing me in the opposition, and jealous of the popular sympathy I excite, had not concerted with M. Debray to ruin me?"

"A probable thing!"

"Why not? Who ever heard of such an occurrence as

this? A false telegraphic dispatch — it is almost impossible for signals to have been made different from those of the last two telegraphs. It was done on purpose for me, I am sure of it."

"Sir," said the baroness, humbly, "are you not aware that the man employed there was dismissed, that they talked of going to law with him, that orders were issued to arrest him, and that this order would have been put into execution if he had not escaped their researches by a flight which proves either his madness or his culpability? It was a mistake."

"Yes, which makes fools laugh, which caused the minister to have a sleepless night, which has caused the minister's secretaries to blacken several sheets of paper, but which has cost me 700,000 francs."

"But, sir," said Hermine, suddenly, "if all this is, as you say, caused by M. Debray, why, instead of going direct to him, do you come and tell me of it? Why, to accuse the man, do you address the woman?"

"Do I know M. Debray? — do I wish to know him? — do I wish to know that he gives advice? — do I wish to follow it? — do I speculate? No; you do all this, not I."

"Still, it seems to me that, as you profit by it ——"

Danglars shrugged his shoulders.

"Foolish creature!" he exclaimed; "women fancy they have talent because they have managed two or three intrigues without being the talk of Paris! But know that if you have even hidden your irregularities from your husband, which is but the commencement of the art — for generally husbands *will* not see — you would then have been but a faint imitation of most of your friends among the women of the world. But it has not been so with me — I see, and always have seen, during the last sixteen years; you may perhaps have hidden a thought, but not a step, not an action, not a fault, has escaped me, while you flattered yourself upon your address, and firmly believed you had deceived me. What has been the result? That,

thanks to my pretended ignorance, there are none of your friends, from M. de Villefort to M. Debray, who have not trembled before me. There is not one who has not treated me as the master of the house, the only title I desire with respect to you; there is not one, in fact, who would have dared to speak of me as I have spoken of them this day. I will allow you to make me hateful, but I will prevent you rendering me ridiculous, and, above all, I forbid you to ruin me."

The baroness had been tolerably composed until the name of Villefort had been pronounced; but then she became pale, and rising, as if touched by a spring, she stretched out her hands as though conjuring an apparition; she then took two or three steps towards her husband, as though to tear the secret from him, of which he was ignorant, or which he withheld from some odious calculation, as all his calculations were.

"M. de Villefort! — What do you mean?"

"I mean that M. de Nargonne, your first husband, being neither a philosopher nor a banker, or, perhaps, being both, and seeing there was nothing to be got out of a procureur du roi, died of grief or anger at finding, after an absence of nine months, that you had been *enceinte* six. I am brutal. I not only allow it, but boast of it; it is one of the reasons of my success in commercial business. Why did he kill himself instead of you? Because he had no cash to save. My life belongs to my cash. M. Debray has made me lose 700,000 francs; let him bear his share of the loss, and we will go on as before; if not, let him become bankrupt for the 250,000 livres, and do as all bankrupts do — disappear. He is a charming fellow, I allow, when his news is correct, but when it is not, there are fifty others in the world who would do better than he."

Madame Danglars was rooted to the spot; she made a violent effort to reply to this last attack, but she fell upon a chair, thinking of Villefort, of the dinner scene, of the strange series of misfortunes which had taken place in her

house during the last few days, and changed the usual calm of her establishment to a scene of scandalous debate. Danglars did not even look at her, though she tried all she could to faint. He shut the bedroom door after him, without adding another word, and returned to his apartments; and when Madame Danglars recovered from her half-fainting condition, she could almost believe she had had a disagreeable dream.

CHAPTER LXVI.

MATRIMONIAL PROJECTS.

THE day following this scene, at the hour the banker usually chose to pay a visit to Madame Danglars on his way to his office, his *coupé* did not appear in the court. At this time, that is, about half-past twelve, Madame Danglars ordered her carriage and went out. Danglars, placed behind a curtain, watched the departure he had been waiting for. He gave orders that he should be informed directly Madame Danglars appeared, but at two o'clock she had not returned. He then called for his horses, drove to the Chamber, and inscribed his name to speak against the budget. From twelve to two o'clock Danglars had remained in his study, unsealing his dispatches, and becoming more and more sad every minute, heaping figure upon figure, and receiving, among other visits, one from Major Cavalcanti, who, as stiff and as exact as ever, presented himself precisely at the hour named the night before, to terminate his business with the banker. On leaving the Chamber, Danglars, who had shown violent marks of agitation during the sitting, and been more bitter than ever against the ministry, re-entered his carriage, and told the coachman to drive to the Avenue des Champs Elysées, No. 30.

Monte-Cristo was at home; only he was engaged with some one, and begged Danglars to wait for a moment in the drawing-room. While the banker was waiting, the door opened, and a man dressed as an abbé entered, who, doubtless, more familiar with the house than he was, instead of waiting merely bowed and passing on to the

further apartments, disappeared. A minute after the door by which the priest had entered reopened, and Monte-Cristo appeared.

"Pardon me," said he, "my dear baron, but one of my friends, the Abbé Busoni, whom you perhaps saw pass by, has just arrived in Paris; not having seen him for a long time, I could not make up my mind to leave him sooner, so I hope this will be sufficient reason for my having made you wait."

"Nay," said Danglars, "it is my fault; I have chosen my visit at a wrong time, and will retire."

"Not at all; on the contrary be seated; but what is the matter with you? You look careworn! really, you alarm me; for a capitalist to be so sad, like the appearance of a comet, presages some misfortune to the world."

"I have been in ill luck for several days," said Danglars, "and I have heard nothing but bad news."

"Ah! indeed," said Monte-Cristo. "Have you had another fall at the Bourse?"

"No! I am safe for a few days at least; I am only annoyed about a bankrupt of Trieste."

"Really? Does it happen to be Jacopo Manfredi?"

"Exactly so: imagine a man who has transacted business with me, for I do not know how long, to the amount of eight or nine hundred thousand francs during the year. Never a mistake or delay—a fellow who paid like a prince. Well, I was a million in advance with him, and now my fine Jacopo Manfredi suspends payment!"

"Really?"

"It is an unheard-of fatality. I draw upon him for 600,000 francs, my bills are returned unpaid, and more than that, I hold bills of exchange signed by him to the value of 400,000 francs, payable at his correspondent's in Paris at the end of this month. To-day is the 30th. I present them; but my correspondent has disappeared. This, with my Spanish affairs, make a pretty end to the month."

"Then you really lost by that affair in Spain?"

"Yes; only 700,000 francs out of my cash-box; nothing more!"

"Why, how could you make such a mistake — such an old stager?"

"Oh, it is all my wife's fault. She dreamed Don Carlos had returned to Spain; she believes in dreams. It is magnetism, she says; and when she dreams a thing, it is sure to happen, she assures me. On this conviction, I allow her to speculate; she has her bank and her stock-broker; she speculated and lost. It is true she speculates with her own money, not mine; nevertheless, you can understand that when 700,000 francs leave the wife's pocket, the husband always finds it out. But do you mean to say you have not heard this? Why, the thing has made a tremendous noise."

"Yes, I heard it spoken of, but I did not know the details; and then no one can be more ignorant than I am of the affairs in the Bourse."

"Then you do not speculate?"

"I? How could I speculate when I already have so much trouble in regulating my income? I should be obliged, besides my steward, to keep a clerk and a boy. But touching these Spanish affairs. I think the baroness did not dream the whole of this entrance of Don Carlos. The papers said something about it, did they not?"

"Then you believe the newspapers?"

"I? — not the least in the world; only I fancied that the honest 'Messenger' was an exception to the rule, and that this only announced telegraphic dispatches."

"Well! this is what puzzles me," replied Danglars; "the news of the return of Don Carlos was brought by telegraph."

"So that," said Monte-Cristo, "you have lost nearly 1,700,000 francs this month."

"Not nearly, indeed; that is exactly my loss."

"*Diable!*" said Monte-Cristo, compassionately, "it is a hard blow for a third-rate fortune."

"Third-rate," said Danglars, rather humbled, "what do you mean by that?"

"Certainly," continued Monte-Cristo; "I make three assortments in fortunes — first-rate, second-rate, and third-rate fortunes. I call those first-rate which are composed of treasures one possesses under one's hands, such as mines, lands, and funded property, in such states as France, Austria, and England, providing these treasures and property form a total of about a hundred millions; I call those second-rate fortunes gained by manufacturing enterprises, joint-stock companies, vice-royalties, and principalities, not drawing more than 1,500,000 francs, the whole forming a capital of about fifty millions; finally, I call those third-rate fortunes composed of a fluctuating capital, dependent upon the will of others, or upon chances which a bankruptcy involves or a false telegraph shakes: such as banks, speculations of the day, in fact all operations under the influence of greater or less mischances, the whole bringing in a real or fictitious capital of about fifteen millions. I think this is about your position, is it not?"

"Confound it! yes!" replied Danglars.

"The result, then, of six more such months as this would be to reduce the third-rate house to despair."

"Oh!" said Danglars, becoming very pale, "how you are running on!"

"Let us imagine seven such months," continued Monte-Cristo, in the same tone. "Tell me, have you ever thought seven times 1,700,000 francs make nearly twelve millions? No, you have not, — well, you are right, for if you indulged in such reflections, you would never risk your principal, which is to the speculator what the skin is to civilized man. We have our clothes, some more splendid than others — this is our credit; but when a man dies he has only his skin; in the same way, on retiring from business you have nothing but your real principal of about five or six millions at the most; for the third-rate fortunes are never more than a fourth of what they appear to be, like

the locomotive on a railway, the size of which is magnified by the smoke and steam surrounding it. Well, out of the five or six millions which form your real capital, you have just lost nearly two millions, which must, of course, in the same degree diminish your credit and fictitious fortune; to follow out my simile, your skin has been opened by bleeding, which, repeated three or four times, will cause death — so pay attention to it, M. Danglars. Do you want money? Do you wish me to lend you some?"

"What a bad calculator you are!" exclaimed Danglars, calling to his assistance all his philosophy and dissimulation. "I have made money at the same time by speculations which have succeeded. I have made up for the loss of blood by nutrition. I lost a battle in Spain, I have been defeated in Trieste, but my naval army in India will have taken some galleons, and my Mexican pioneers will have discovered some mine."

"Very good! but the wound remains, and will reopen at the first loss."

"No! for I am only embarked in certainties," replied Danglars, with the air of a mountebank, sounding out his own praises; "to involve me, three governments must crumble to dust."

"Well, such things have been!"

"That there should be a famine!"

"Recollect the seven fat and the seven lean kine."

"Or that the sea should become dry, as in the days of Pharaoh; even then my vessels would become caravans."

"So much the better; I congratulate you, my dear M. Danglars," said Monte-Cristo; "I see I was deceived, and that you belong to the class of second-rate fortunes."

"I think I may aspire to that honor," said Danglars, with a smile, which reminded Monte-Cristo of one of those sickly moons which bad artists are so fond of daubing into their pictures of ruins; "but while we are speaking of business," he added, pleased to find an opportunity of

changing the subject, "tell me what I am to do for M. Cavalcanti?"

"Give him money, if he is recommended to you, and the recommendation seems good."

"Excellent! he presented himself this morning with a bond of 40,000 francs, payable at sight, on you, signed by Busoni, and returned by you to me, with your indorsement; of course I immediately counted him over the forty bank-notes."

Monte-Cristo nodded his head in token of assent.

"But that is not all," continued Danglars; "he has opened an account with my house for his son."

"May I ask how much he allows the young man?"

"Five thousand francs per month."

"Sixty thousand francs per year. I thought I was right in believing that Cavalcanti to be a stingy fellow. How can a young man live upon 5,000 francs a month?"

"But you understand that if the young man should want a few thousands more ——"

"Do not advance it; the father will never repay it; you do not know these ultramontane millionaires; they are regular misers. And by whom were they recommended to you?"

"Oh, by the house of Fenzi, one of the best in Florence."

"I do not mean to say that you will lose, but, nevertheless, mind you, hold to the terms of the agreement."

"Would you not trust the Cavalcanti?"

"I? oh, I would advance six millions on his signature. I was only speaking in reference to the second-rate fortunes we were mentioning just now."

"And with all this, how plain he is! I should never have taken him for anything more than a mere major."

"And you would have flattered him, for certainly, as you say, he has no manner. The first time I saw him he appeared to me like an old lieutenant who had grown mouldy beneath his epaulet. But all the Italians are the

same; they are like old Jews when they are not glittering in Oriental splendor."

"The young man is better," said Danglars.

"Yes; a little nervous, perhaps, but, upon the whole, he appeared tolerable. I was uneasy about him."

"Why?"

"Because you met him at my house, just after his introduction into the world, as they told me. He has been travelling with a very severe tutor, and had never been to Paris before."

"Ah, I believe noblemen marry among themselves, do they not?" asked Danglars, carelessly; "they like to unite their fortunes."

"It is usual, certainly; but Cavalcanti is an original, who does nothing like other people. I cannot help thinking he has brought his son to France to choose a wife."

"Do you think so?"

"I am sure of it."

"And you have heard his fortune mentioned?"

"Nothing else was talked of; only some said he was worth millions, and others that he did not possess a farthing."

"And what is your opinion?"

"I ought not to influence you, because it is only my own personal impression."

"Well, and it is that ——"

"My opinion is, that all these old *podestats*, these ancient *condottieri* — for the Cavalcanti have commanded armies and governed provinces — my opinion, I say, is, that they have buried their millions in corners, the secret of which they have only transmitted to their eldest sons, who have done the same from generation to generation, and the proof of this is seen in their yellow and dry appearance, like the florins of the republic, which, from being constantly gazed upon, have become reflected in them."

"Certainly," said Danglars, "and this is further sup-

ported by the fact of their not possessing an inch of land."

"Very little, at least; I know of none which Cavalcanti possesses excepting his palace in Lucca."

"Ah! he has a palace?" said Danglars, laughing; "come, that is something."

"Yes; and more than that, he lets it to the minister of finance, while he lives in a simple house. Oh! as I told you before, I think the good man very close."

"Come, you do not flatter him."

"I scarcely know him; I think I have seen him three times in my life; all I know relating to him is through Busoni and himself; he was telling me this morning that, tired of letting his property lie dormant in Italy, which is a dead nation, he wished to find a method, either in France or England, of multiplying his millions; but remember, that though I place great confidence in Busoni, I am not responsible for this."

"Never mind; accept my thanks for the client you have sent me; it is a fine name to inscribe on my lists, and my cashier was quite proud of it when I explained to him who the Cavalcanti were. By the way, this is merely a simple question: when these kind of people marry their sons, do they give them any fortune?"

"Oh! that depends upon circumstances. I know an Italian prince rich as a gold mine, one of the noblest families in Tuscany, who, when his sons married according to his wish, gave them millions, and when they married against his consent, merely allowed them thirty crowns a month. Should Andrea marry according to his father's views, he will perhaps give him one, two, or three millions. For example, supposing it were the daughter of a banker, he might take an interest in the house of the father-in-law of his son; then again, if he disliked his choice, the major takes the key, double-locks his coffer, and Master Andrea would be obliged to live like the son of a Parisian family, by shuffling cards or rattling the dice."

"Ah! that boy will find out some Bavarian or Peruvian princess; he will want a crown and an immense fortune."

"No; these grand lords on the other side of the Alps frequently marry into plain families; like Jupiter, they like to cross the race. But do you wish to marry Andrea, my dear M. Danglars, that you are asking so many questions?"

"*Ma foi!*" said Danglars, "it would not be a bad speculation, I fancy, and you know I am a speculator."

"You are not thinking of Mademoiselle Danglars, I hope; you would not like poor Andrea to have his throat cut by Albert?"

"Albert!" repeated Danglars, shrugging his shoulders; "ah, yes! he would care very little about it, I think."

"But he is betrothed to your daughter, I believe?"

"Certainly, M. de Morcerf and I have talked about this marriage, but Madame de Morcerf and Albert ——"

"You do not mean to say that it would not be a good match?"

"Indeed, I imagine that Mademoiselle Danglars is as good as M. de Morcerf."

"Mademoiselle Danglars's fortune will be great, no doubt, especially if the telegraph should not make any more mistakes."

"Oh! I do not mean her fortune only; but tell me ——"

"What?"

"Why did you not invite M. and Madame de Morcerf to your dinner?"

"I did so, but he excused himself on account of Madame de Morcerf being obliged to go to Dieppe for the benefit of sea air."

"Yes, yes," said Danglars, laughing, "it would do her a great deal of good."

"Why so?"

"Because it is the air she always breathed in her youth." Monte-Cristo took no notice of this ill-natured remark.

"But still if Albert be not so rich as Mademoiselle Danglars," said the count, "you must allow that he has a fine name."

"So he has; but I like mine as well."

"Certainly, your name is very popular, and does honor to the title they intended to adorn you with; but you are too intelligent not to know that according to a prejudice, too firmly rooted to be exterminated, a nobility which dates back five centuries is worth more than one that can only reckon twenty years."

"And for this very reason," said Danglars, with a smile which he tried to make sardonic, "I prefer M. Andrea Cavalcanti to M. Albert de Morcerf."

"Still, I should not think the Morcerfs would yield to the Cavalcanti."

"The Morcerfs! Stay, my dear count," said Danglars, "you are a clever man, are you not?"

"I think so."

"And you understand heraldry?"

"A little."

"Well, look at my coat of arms; it is worth more than Morcerf's."

"Why so?"

"Because, though I am not a baron by birth, my real name is, at least, Danglars."

"Well, what then?"

"While his is not Morcerf."

"How! — not Morcerf?"

"Not the least in the world."

"Go on!"

"I have been made a baron, so that I actually am one; he made himself a count, so that he is not one at all."

"Impossible!"

"Listen, my dear count; M. de Morcerf has been my friend, or rather my acquaintance, during the last thirty years. You know I have made the most of my arms, though I never forgot my origin."

"A proof of great humility or great pride," said Monte-Cristo.

"Well, when I was a clerk, Morcerf was a mere fisherman."

"And then he was called ——"

"Fernand."

"Only Fernand?"

"Fernand Mondego."

"You are sure?"

"*Pardieu!* I have bought enough fish of him to know his name."

"Then, why do you think of giving your daughter to him?"

"Because, Fernand and Danglars, being both *parvenus*, both having become noble, both rich, are about equal in worth, excepting that there have been certain things mentioned of him that were never said of me."

"What?"

"Oh, nothing!"

"Ah, yes! what you tell me recalls to mind something about the name of Fernand Mondego. I have heard that name in Greece."

"In conjunction with the affairs of Ali Pasha?"

"Exactly so."

"This is the mystery," said Danglars; "I acknowledge I would have given anything to find it out."

"It would be very easy if you much wished it."

"How so?"

"Probably you have some correspondent in Greece?"

"I should think so!"

"At Janina?"

"Everywhere."

"Well, write to your correspondent in Janina, and ask him what part was played by a Frenchman named Fernand Mondego in the catastrophe of Ali Tebelen."

"You are right!" exclaimed Danglars, rising quickly; "I will write to-day."

"Do so."

"I will."

"And if you should hear anything very scandalous ——"

"I will communicate it to you."

"You will oblige me."

Danglars rushed out of the room, and made but one leap into his *coupé*.

CHAPTER LXVII

THE OFFICE OF THE PROCUREUR DU ROI.

LET us leave the banker driving his horses at their fullest speed, and follow Madame Danglars in her morning excursions. We have said that, at half-past twelve o'clock, Madame Danglars had ordered her horses, and left home in her carriage. She directed her course towards the Faubourg Saint Germain, went down the Rue de Seine, and stopped at the Passage du Pont Neuf. She descended and crossed the passage. She was very plainly dressed, as would be the case with a woman of taste walking in the morning. At the Rue Guenegaud she called a *fiacre*, and directed him to drive to the Rue de Harlay.

As soon as she was seated in the coach, she drew from her pocket a very thick black veil, which she tied on to her straw bonnet; she then replaced the bonnet, and saw with pleasure in a little pocket mirror that her white complexion and brilliant eyes were alone visible. The *fiacre* crossed the Pont Neuf and entered the Rue de Harlay by the Place Dauphine; the driver was paid as soon as the door opened, and stepping lightly up the stairs, Madame Danglars soon reached the Hall des Pas-Perdus.

There was a great deal going on that morning, and many business-like persons at the Palais; business-like persons pay very little attention to women, and Madame Danglars crossed the hall without exciting more attention than any other female calling upon her lawyer. There was a great press of people in M. de Villefort's antechamber, but Madame Danglars had no occasion even to pronounce her name; the instant she appeared the door-

keeper rose, came to her, and asked whether she was not the person with whom M. le procureur du roi had made an appointment, and on her affirmative answer being given, he conducted her by a private passage to M. de Villefort's office. The magistrate was seated in an armchair, writing, with his back towards the door; he heard it open and the doorkeeper pronounce the words, "Walk in, madame!" and then reclose it without moving; no sooner had the man's footsteps ceased, than he started up, drew the bolts, closed the curtains, and examined every corner of the room. Then, when he had assured himself that he could neither be seen nor heard, and was, consequently, relieved of doubts, he said:

"Thanks, madame — thanks for your punctuality;" and he offered a chair to Madame Danglars, which she accepted, for her heart beat so violently that she felt nearly suffocated.

"It is a long time, madame," said the procureur du roi, describing a half-circle with his chair, so as to place himself directly opposite to Madame Danglars — "it is a long time since I had the pleasure of speaking alone with you; and I regret that we have only now met to enter upon a painful conversation."

"Nevertheless, sir, you see I have answered your first appeal; although, certainly, the conversation must be much more painful for me than for you."

Villefort smiled bitterly.

"It is true, then," he said, rather uttering his thoughts aloud than addressing his companion — "it is true, then, that all our actions leave their traces — some sad, others bright — on our paths! It is, then, true, that every step in our lives resembles the course of an insect on the sand — it leaves its track! Alas! to many the path is traced by tears."

"Sir," said Madame Danglars, "you can feel for my emotion, can you not? Spare me, then, I beseech you. When I look at this room, whence so many guilty crea-

tures have departed trembling and ashamed — when I look at that chair, before which now I sit trembling and ashamed! oh! it requires all my reason to convince me that I am not a very guilty woman and you a menacing judge!”

Villefort dropped his head and sighed.

“And I,” he said, “I feel that my place is not on the judge’s seat, but on the prisoner’s stool.”

“You?” said Madame Danglars.

“Yes, I.”

“I think, sir, you exaggerate your situation,” said Madame Danglars, whose beautiful eyes sparkled for a moment. “The paths of which you were just speaking have been traced by all young men of ardent imaginations. Besides the pleasure, there is always remorse, from the indulgence of our passions; and, after all, what have you men to fear from all this? the world excuses and notoriety ennobles you.”

“Madame,” replied Villefort, “you know that I am no hypocrite, or, at least, that I never deceive without a reason. If my brow be severe, it is because many misfortunes have clouded it; if my heart be petrified, it is that it might sustain the blows it has received. I was not so in my youth; I was not so on the night of my betrothal, when we were all seated around a table in the Rue du Cours at Marseilles. But since then everything has changed in and about me; I am accustomed to brave difficulties, and, in the conflict, to crush those who, by their own free will or by chance, voluntarily or involuntarily interfere with me in my career. It is generally the case that what we most ardently desire is as ardently withheld from us by those who wish to obtain it, or from whom we attempt to snatch it. Thus, the greater number of a man’s errors come before him disguised under the specious form of necessity; then, after error has been committed in a moment of excitement, of delirium, or of fear, we see that we might have avoided and escaped it. The means we might

have used, which we in our blindness could not see, then seem simple and easy, and we say, 'Why did I not do this instead of that?' Women, on the contrary, are rarely tormented with remorse; for the decision does not come from you; your misfortunes are generally imposed upon you, and your faults the result of others' crimes."

"In any case, sir, you will allow," replied Madame Danglars, "that if the fault were alone mine, I last night received a severe punishment for it."

"Poor thing!" said Villefort, pressing her hand, "it was too severe for your strength, for you were twice overwhelmed, and yet ——"

"Well?"

"Well, I must tell you. Collect all your courage, for you have not yet heard all!"

"Ah!" exclaimed Madame Danglars, alarmed, "what is there more to hear?"

"You only look back to the past; and it is, indeed, bad enough. Well! picture to yourself a future more gloomy still — certainly frightful — perhaps sanguinary!"

The baroness knew how calm Villefort naturally was, and his present excitement frightened her so much, that she opened her mouth to scream, but the sound died in her throat.

"How has this terrible past been recalled?" cried Villefort; "how is it that it has escaped from the depths of the tomb and the recesses of our hearts, where it was buried, to visit us now, like a phantom, whitening our cheeks and flushing our brows with shame?"

"Alas!" said Hermine, "doubtless it is chance!"

"Chance!" replied Villefort; "no, no, madame, there is no such thing as chance."

"Oh, yes; has not fatal chance revealed all this? Was it not by chance the Count of Monte-Cristo bought this house? Was it not by chance he caused the earth to be dug? Is it not by chance that the unfortunate child was disinterred under the trees? That poor innocent offspring

of mine, which I never even kissed, but for whom I wept many, many tears. Ah! my heart clung to the count when he mentioned the dear spoil found beneath the flowers."

"Well! No, madame; this is the terrible news I have to tell you," said Villefort, in a hollow voice. "No; nothing was found beneath the flowers, there was no child disinterred — no! You must not weep; no, you must not groan — you must tremble!"

"What can you mean?" asked Madame Danglars, shuddering.

"I mean that M. de Monte-Cristo, digging underneath these trees, found neither skeleton nor chest; because neither of them was there."

"Neither of them there!" repeated Madame Danglars, fixing upon him her eyes, which, by their fearful dilation, indicated how much she was alarmed.

"Neither of them there?" she again said, as though striving to impress herself with the meaning of the words which escaped her.

"No!" said Villefort, burying his face in his hands; "no, a hundred times — no!"

"Then you did not bury the poor child there, sir? Why did you deceive me? Where did you place it? tell me — where?"

"There! But listen to me — listen — and you will pity one who has for twenty years borne the heavy burden of the grief I am about to reveal, without casting the least portion upon you."

"Oh! you frighten me! but speak, I will listen."

"You recollect the sad night, when you were half expiring on that bed in the red damask room while I, scarcely less agitated than you, awaited your delivery. The child was born — was given to me — without movement, without breath, without voice; we thought it dead."

Madame Danglars moved rapidly, as though she would spring from her chair; but Villefort stopped, and clasped his hands as if to implore her attention.

"We thought it dead," he repeated; "I placed it in the chest, which was to take the place of a coffin; I descended to the garden; I dug a hole, and then flung it down in haste. Scarcely had I covered it with mould, when the arm of the Corsican was stretched towards me; I saw a shadow rise, and at the same time a flash of light. I felt pain; I wished to cry out, but an icy shiver ran through my veins and stifled my voice — I fell lifeless, and fancied myself killed. Never shall I forget your sublime courage, when, having returned to consciousness, I dragged myself to the foot of the stairs, where, expiring yourself, you came to meet me. We were obliged to keep silent upon the dreadful catastrophe. You had the fortitude to regain the house, assisted by your nurse. A duel was the pretext for my wound. Though we scarcely expected it, our secret remained in our own keeping alone. I was taken to Versailles; for three months I struggled with death; at last, as I seemed to cling to life, I was ordered to the south. Four men carried me from Paris to Chalons, walking six leagues a day: Madame de Villefort followed the litter in her carriage. At Chalons, I was put upon the Soane, thence I passed on to the Rhone, whence I descended, merely with the current, to Arles; at Arles I was again placed on my litter, and continued my journey to Marseilles. My recovery lasted six months; I never heard you mentioned, and I did not dare inquire for you. When I returned to Paris, I learned that, widow of M. de Narbonne, you had married M. Danglars.

"What had been the subject of my thoughts ever since consciousness had returned to me? Always the same — always the child's corpse, which, every night in my dreams, rising from the earth, fixed itself above the grave with a menacing look and gesture. I inquired immediately on my return to Paris; the house had not been inhabited since we left it, but it had just been let for nine years. I found the tenant; I pretended that I disliked the idea of a house belonging to my wife's father and mother passing

into the hands of strangers; I offered to pay them for yielding up the lease; they demanded 6,000 francs, I would have given 10,000—I would have given 20,000. I had the money with me; I made the tenant sign the cancelling deed; and when I had obtained what I so much wanted, I galloped to Auteuil. No one had entered the house since I had left it. It was five o'clock in the afternoon; I ascended into the red room, and waited for night. There all the thoughts which had disturbed me during my year of constant agony occurred with double force. The Corsican, who had declared the *vendetta* against me, who had followed me from Nîmes to Paris, who had hid himself in the garden, who had struck me, had seen me dig the grave, had seen me inter the child, he might become acquainted with your person; nay, he might even then have known it. Would he not one day make you pay for keeping this terrible secret? Would it not be a sweet revenge for him when he found I had not died from the blow of his dagger? It was therefore necessary, before everything else, and at all risks, that I should cause all traces of the past to disappear—that I should destroy every material vestige; too much reality would always remain in my recollection. It was for this I had annulled the lease; it was for this I had come—it was for this I was waiting. Night arrived; I allowed it to become quite dark. I was without a light in that room; when the wind shook all the doors, behind which I continually expected to see some concealed spy, I trembled. I seemed everywhere to hear your moans behind me in the bed, and I dared not turn around. My heart beat so violently that I feared my wound would open; at length, one by one, all the noises in the neighboring country ceased. I understood that I had nothing to fear, that I should neither be seen nor heard, so I decided upon descending to the garden.

“Listen, Hermine! I consider myself as brave as most men; but when I drew from my breast the little key of the staircase which I had found in my coat—that little

key we both used to cherish so much, which you wished to have fastened to a golden ring — when I opened the door, and saw the pale moon shedding a long stream of white light on the spiral staircase like a spectre, I leaned against the wall, and nearly shrieked. I seemed to be going mad. At last I mastered my agitation. I descended the staircase step by step; the only thing I could not conquer was a strange trembling in my knees. I grasped the railings; if I had relaxed my hold for a moment, I should have fallen. I reached the lower door. Outside this door a spade was placed against the wall; I took it and advanced toward the thicket. I had provided myself with a dark lantern. In the middle of the lawn I stopped to light it, then I continued my path. It was the end of November; all the freshness of the garden had disappeared: the trees were nothing more than skeletons with their long bony arms, and the dead leaves sounded on the gravel under my feet. My terror overcame me to such a degree as I approached the thicket, that I took a pistol from my pocket and armed myself. I fancied continually that I saw the figure of the Corsican between the branches. I examined the thicket with my dark lantern; it was empty. I cast my eyes all around; I was indeed alone; no noise disturbed the silence of the night but the owl, whose piercing cry seemed as if calling up the phantoms of the night. I tied my lantern to a forked branch I had remarked a year before at the precise spot where I stopped to dig the hole. The grass had grown very thickly there during the summer, and when autumn arrived, no one had been there to mow it. Still one place less covered attracted my attention; it evidently was there I had turned up the ground. I returned to the work. The hour, then, for which I had been waiting during the last year, had at length arrived. How I worked: how I hoped; how I sounded every piece of turf, thinking to find some resistance to my spade, but no — I found nothing, though I had made a hole twice as large as the first. I thought I had been deceived, had mistaken the

spot; I turned around; I looked at the trees; I tried to recall the details which had struck me at the time. A cold, sharp wind whistled through the leafless branches, and yet the drops fell from my forehead. I recollected that I was stabbed just as I was trampling the ground to fill up the hole; while doing so, I had leaned against a false ebony tree; behind me was an artificial rock, intended to serve as a resting-place for persons walking in the garden; in falling, my hand, relaxing its hold of the tree, felt the coldness of this stone. On my right I saw the tree, behind me the rock. I stood in the same attitude and threw myself down; I rose, and again began digging and enlarging the hole; still I found nothing — nothing — the chest was no longer there."

"The chest no longer there!" murmured Madame Danglars, choking with fear.

"Think not I contented myself with this one effort," continued Villefort. "No, I searched the whole thicket. I thought the assassin, having discovered the chest, and supposing it to be a treasure, had intended carrying it off; but, perceiving his error, had dug another hole, and deposited it; but there was nothing. Then the idea struck me that he had not taken these precautions, and had simply thrown it in a corner. In the last case I must wait for daylight to make my research. I regained the room and waited."

"Oh, Heaven!"

"When daylight dawned I went down again. My first visit was to the thicket. I hoped to find some traces which had escaped me in the dark. I had turned up the earth over the surface of more than twenty feet square, and a depth of two feet. A laborer would not have done in a day what occupied me an hour. But I could find nothing — absolutely nothing. Then I renewed the search; supposing it had been thrown aside, it would probably be on the path which led to the little gate; but this examination was as useless as the first; and, with a bursting heart,

I returned to the thicket, which now contained no hope for me."

"Oh!" cried Madame Danglars, "it was enough to drive you mad."

"I hoped for a moment that it might," said Villefort; "but that happiness was denied me. However, recovering my strength and my ideas, 'Why,' said I, 'should that man have carried away the corpse?'"

"But you said," replied Madame Danglars, "he would require it as a proof."

"Ah! no, madame, that could not be; dead bodies are not kept a year; they are shown to a magistrate, and evidence is taken; now nothing of the kind has happened."

"What, then?" asked Hermine, trembling violently.

"Something more terrible, more fatal, more alarming for us; the child was perhaps alive, and the assassin may have saved it."

Madame Danglars uttered a piercing cry, and, seizing Villefort's hands, exclaimed:

"My child alive! you buried my child alive, sir! You were not certain my child was dead, and you buried it! Ah! —"

Madame Danglars had risen, and stood before the procureur, whose hands she wrung in her feeble grasp.

"I know not; I merely suppose so, as I might suppose anything else," replied Villefort, with a look so fixed, it indicated that his powerful mind was on the verge of despair and madness.

"Ah! my child! my poor child!" cried the baroness, falling on her chair, and stifling her sobs in her handkerchief.

Villefort, becoming somewhat reassured, perceived that, to avert the maternal storm gathering over his head, he must inspire Madame Danglars with the terror he felt.

"You understand, then, that if it were so," said he, rising in his turn, and approaching the baroness, to speak to her in a lower tone, "we are lost; this child lives, and

some one knows it lives; some one is in possession of our secret; and since Monte-Cristo speaks before us of a child disinterred, when that child could not be found, it is he who is in possession of our secret."

"Just God! avenging God!" murmured Madame Danglars.

Villefort's only answer was a species of groan.

"But the child — the child, sir?" repeated the agitated mother.

"How have I searched for him!" replied Villefort, wringing his hands; "how have I called him in my long sleepless nights! How have I longed for royal wealth to purchase a million of secrets from a million of men, and to find mine among them. At last, one day when, for the hundredth time, I took up my spade, I asked myself again and again what the Corsican could have done with the child; a child encumbers a fugitive; perhaps, on perceiving it was still alive, he had thrown it into the river."

"Impossible!" cried Madame Danglars; "a man may murder another out of revenge, but he would not deliberately drown a child."

"Perhaps," continued Villefort, "he had put it in the foundling hospital."

"Oh! yes, yes!" cried the baroness; "my child is there!"

"I ran to the hospital, and learned that the same night — the night of the 20th September — a child had been brought there, wrapped in part of a fine linen napkin, purposely torn in half. This portion of the napkin was marked with half a baron's crown and the letter H."

"Truly, truly," said Madame Danglars, "all my linen is marked thus; Monsieur de Nargonne was a baronet, and my name is Hermine. Thank God! my child was not then dead."

"No, it was not dead."

"And you can tell me so without fearing to make me die of joy, sir? Where is the child?"

Villefort shrugged his shoulders.

"Do I know?" said he; "and do you believe that if I knew I would relate to you all its trials and all its adventures as would a dramatist or a novel-writer? Alas! no, I know not. A woman, about six months after, came to claim it with the other half of the napkin. This woman gave all the requisite particulars, and it was intrusted to her."

"But you should have inquired for the woman: you should have traced her."

"And what do you think I did? I feigned a criminal process, and employed all the most acute bloodhounds and skilful agents in search of her. They traced her to Chalons; and there they lost her."

"They lost her?"

"Yes; forever."

Madame Danglars had listened to this recital with a sigh, a tear, or a shriek, for every circumstance.

"And that is all?" said she; "and you stopped there?"

"Oh, no!" said Villefort; "I never ceased to search and to inquire. However, the last two or three years I had allowed myself some respite. But now I will begin with more perseverance and fury than ever, since fear urges me, not my conscience."

"But," replied Madame Danglars, "the Count of Montecristo can know nothing, or he would not seek our society as he does."

"Oh! the wickedness of man is very great," said Villefort, "since it surpasses the goodness of God. Did you observe that man's eyes while he was speaking to us?"

"No."

"But have you ever watched him carefully?"

"Doubtless he is capricious, but that is all; one thing alone struck me: of all the exquisite things he placed before us, he touched nothing; I might have suspected he was poisoning us."

"And you see you would have been deceived."

"Yes, doubtless."

"But believe me, that man has other projects; for that reason I wished to see you, to speak to you, to warn you against every one, but especially against him. Tell me," cried Villefort, fixing his eyes steadfastly on her, "did you ever reveal to any one our connection?"

"Never to any one!"

"You understand me?" replied Villefort, affectionately; "when I say any one, pardon my urgency, to any one living I mean."

"Yes, yes, I understand very well," ejaculated the baroness; "never, I swear to you."

"Were you ever in the habit of writing in the evening what had transpired in the morning? Do you keep a journal?"

"No! my life has been passed in frivolity; I wish to forget it myself."

"Do you talk in your sleep?"

"I sleep soundly like a child; do you not remember?" the color mounted to the baroness's face; and Villefort turned awfully pale.

"It is true," said he, in so low a tone that he could hardly be heard.

"Well?" said the baroness.

"Well, I understand what I now have to do," replied Villefort. "In less than one week from this time I will ascertain who this M. de Monte-Cristo is, whence he comes, where he goes, and why he speaks in our presence of children which have been disinterred in a garden."

Villefort pronounced these words with an accent which would have made the count shudder had he heard him. Then he pressed the hand the baroness reluctantly gave him, and led her respectfully back to the door.

Madame Danglars returned in another hackney-coach to the passage, on the other side of which she found her carriage, and her coachman sleeping peacefully on his box while waiting for her.

CHAPTER LXVIII.

A SUMMER BALL.

THE same day, during the interview of Madame Danglars with the procureur, a travelling carriage entering the Rue du Helder passed through the gateway of No. 27 and stopped in the yard. In a moment the door was opened, and Madame de Morcerf alighted, leaning on her son's arm. Albert soon left her, ordered his horses, and having arranged his toilet, drove to the Champs Elysées, to the house of Monte-Cristo.

The count received him with his habitual smile. It was a strange thing that no one ever appeared to advance a step in that man's favor. Those who would, as it were, force a passage to his heart, found an impassable barrier.

Morcerf, who ran toward him with open arms, was chilled as he drew near, in spite of the friendly smile, and simply held out his hand.

Monte-Cristo shook it coldly, according to his invariable practice.

"Here I am, dear count."

"Welcome home again."

"I arrived an hour since."

"From Dieppe?"

"No, from Treport."

"Indeed!"

"And I am directly come to see you."

"That is extremely kind of you," said Monte-Cristo, with a tone of perfect indifference.

"And what is the news?"

"You should not ask a stranger, a foreigner, for news."

"I know it; but in asking for news, I mean, have you done anything for me?"

"Had you commissioned me?" said Monte-Cristo, feigning uneasiness.

"Come, come," said Albert, "do not assume so much indifference. It is said, sympathy travels rapidly; and when at Treport, I felt the electric shock; you have either been working for me or thinking of me."

"Possibly," said Monte-Cristo, "I have indeed thought of you; but the magnetic wire I was guiding acted, indeed, without my knowledge."

"Indeed! pray tell me how it happened."

"Willingly. M. Danglars dined with me."

"I know it; to avoid meeting him, my mother and I left town."

"But he met here M. Andrea Cavalcanti."

"Your Italian prince?"

"Not so fast; M. Andrea only calls himself count."

"Calls himself, do you say?"

"Yes, calls himself."

"Is he not a count?"

"What can I know of him? He calls himself so. I, of course, give him the same title, and every one else does the same."

"What a strange man you are? What next? You said M. Danglars dined here?"

"Yes, with Count Cavalcanti, the marquis his father, Madame Danglars, M. and Madame de Villefort, charming people, M. Debray, Maximilian Morrel, and M. de Château-Renaud."

"Did they speak of me?"

"Not a word."

"So much the worse."

"Why so? I thought you wished them to forget you?"

"If they did not speak of me, I am sure they thought about me, and I am in despair."

"How will that affect you, since Mademoiselle Danglars was not among the number here who thought of you? Truly, she might have thought of you at home."

"I have no fear of that; or, if she did, it was only in the same way in which I think of her."

"Touching sympathy! so you hate each other," said the count.

"Listen!" said Morcerf; "if Mademoiselle Danglars were disposed to take pity on my supposed martyrdom on her account, and would dispense with all matrimonial formalities between our two families, I am ready to agree to the arrangement. In a word, Mademoiselle Danglars would make a charming mistress, but a wife, *diable!*"

"And this," replied Monte-Cristo, "is your opinion of your intended spouse?"

"Yes; it is rather unkind, I acknowledge, but it is true. But as the dream cannot be realized, since Mademoiselle Danglars must become my lawful wife, live perpetually with me, sing to me, compose verses and music within ten paces of me, and that for my whole life, it frightens me. One may forsake a mistress, but a wife, good heavens! there she must always be; and to marry Mademoiselle Danglars would undoubtedly be awful."

"You are difficult to please, viscount."

"Yes, for I often wish for what is impossible."

"What is that?"

"To find such a wife as my father found."

Monte-Cristo turned pale, and looked at Albert, while playing with some magnificent pistols.

"Your father was fortunate, then?" said he.

"You know my opinion of my mother, count; look at her, still beautiful, witty, better than ever. For any other son to have accompanied his mother four days at Treport, it would have been a complaisance, an unprofitable toil; while I return, more contented, more peaceful — shall I say more poetic? — than if I had taken Queen Mab or Titania as my companion."

"That is an overwhelming perfection, and you would make every one vow to live a single life."

"Such are my reasons for not liking to marry Mademoiselle Danglars. Have you ever noticed how much a thing is heightened in value when we obtain possession of it? The diamond which glittered in the window of Marle or of Fossin shines with more splendor when it is our own; but if we are compelled to acknowledge the superiority of another, and still must retain the one that is inferior, do you understand what must be the suffering?"

"Worldling!" murmured the count.

"Thus I shall rejoice when Mademoiselle Eugenie perceives I am but a pitiful atom, with scarcely as many hundred thousand francs as she has millions."

Monte-Cristo smiled.

"One plan occurred to me," continued Albert. "Franz likes all that is eccentric. I tried to make him fall in love with Mademoiselle Danglars; but in spite of four letters, written in the most alluring style, he invariably answered, 'My eccentricity may be great, but it will not make me break my promise.'"

"That is what I call devoted friendship, to recommend to another, one whom you would not marry yourself."

Albert smiled.

"*Apropos*," continued he, "Franz is coming soon, but it will not interest you; you dislike him, I think?"

"I!" said Monte-Cristo; "my dear viscount, how have you discovered that I did not like M. Franz? I like every one."

"And therefore you include me in the expression every one. Many thanks!"

"Let us not mistake," said Monte-Cristo; "I love every one as God commands us to love our neighbors — as Christians; I thoroughly hate but a few. Let us return to M. Franz d'Epinay. Did you say he was coming?"

"Yes; summoned by M. de Villefort, who is apparently as anxious to get Mademoiselle Valentine married as M.

Danglars is to see Mademoiselle Eugenie settled. It must be a very irksome office to be the father of a grown-up daughter; it seems to make them feverish, and to raise their pulse to ninety degrees until they get rid of them."

"But M. d'Epinay, unlike you, bears his misfortune patiently."

"Still more, he talks seriously about the matter, puts on a white cravat, and speaks of his family. He entertains a very high opinion of M. and Madame de Villefort."

"Which they deserve, do they not?"

"I believe they do. M. de Villefort has always passed for a severe but a just man."

"There is, then, one," said Monte-Cristo, "whom you do not condemn like poor Danglars?"

"Because I am not compelled to marry his daughter, perhaps," replied Albert, laughing.

"Indeed, my dear sir," replied Monte-Cristo, "you are revoltingly foppish."

"I foppish! how do you mean?"

"Yes; pray take a cigar, and cease to defend yourself, and to struggle to escape marrying Mademoiselle Danglars. Let things take their course; perhaps you may not have to retract."

"Bah!" said Albert, staring.

"Doubtless, M. le comte, you will not be taken by force. Seriously, do you wish to break off your engagement?"

"I would give a hundred thousand francs to be able to do so."

"Then make yourself quite happy; M. Danglars would give double that sum to attain the same end."

"Am I indeed so happy?" said Albert, who still could not prevent an almost imperceptible cloud passing across his brow. "But, my dear count, has M. Danglars any reason?"

"Ah! there is your proud and selfish nature. You would expose the self-love of another with a hatchet, but you shrink if your own is attacked with a needle."

"But yet M. Danglars appeared ——"

"Delighted with you, did he not? Well, he is a man of bad taste, and is still more enchanted with another. I know not whom: study and judge for yourself."

"Thank you; I understand. But my mother — no, not my mother — I mistake; my father intends giving a ball."

"A ball at this season?"

"Summer balls are fashionable."

"If they were not, the countess has only to wish it, and they would become so."

"You are right. You know they are unmixed balls; those who remain in Paris in July must be true Parisians. Will you take charge of our invitations to Messieurs Cavalcanti?"

"When will it take place?"

"On Saturday."

"M. Cavalcanti's father will be gone."

"But the son will be here; will you invite young M. Cavalcanti?"

"I do not know him, viscount."

"You do not know him?"

"No; I had never seen him until a few days since, and am not responsible for him."

"But you receive him at your house?"

"That is another thing; he was recommended to me by a good abbé, who may be deceived. Give him a direct invitation, but do not ask me to present him. If he were afterwards to marry Mademoiselle Danglars, you would accuse me of intrigue, and would be challenging me; besides, I may not be there myself."

"Where?"

"At your ball."

"Why should you not be there?"

"Because you have not yet invited me."

"But I came expressly for that purpose."

"You are very kind, but I may be prevented."

"If I tell you one thing, you will be so amiable as to set aside all impediments."

"Tell me what it is."

"My mother bids you to come."

"The Countess de Morcerf!" said Monte-Cristo, starting.

"Ah, count!" said Albert, "I assure you, Madame de Morcerf speaks freely to me, and if you have not felt those sympathetic fibres of which I spoke just now thrill within you, you must be entirely devoid of them, for during the last four days we have spoken of no one else."

"You have talked of me?"

"Yes; that is your privilege, being a living problem."

"Then I am also a problem to your mother! I should have thought her too reasonable to be led by imagination."

"A problem, my dear count, for every one—for my mother as well as others; much studied, but not solved, you still remain an enigma—do not fear. My mother is only astonished that you remain so long unresolved. I believe, while the Countess G—— takes you for Lord Ruthven, my mother imagines you to be Cagliostro or Count St. Germain. The first opportunity which you have, confirm her in her opinion; it will be perfectly easy for you, as you have the philosophy of the one and the wit of the other."

"I thank you for the warning," said the count; "I shall endeavor to be prepared for all suppositions."

"You will, then, come on Saturday?"

"Yes, since Madame de Morcerf invites me."

"You are very kind."

"Will M. Danglars be there?"

"He has already been invited by my father. We shall try to persuade the great D'Aguesseau, M. de Villefort, to come, but have not much hope of seeing him."

"'Never despair,' says the proverb."

"Do you dance, count?"

"I dance?"

"Yes, you; it would not be astonishing."

"That is very well before one is above forty. No, I do not dance, but I like to see others. Does Madame de Morcerf dance?"

"Never; you can talk to her, she so delights in your conversation."

"Indeed!"

"Yes, truly; and I assure you that you are the only man of whom I have heard her speak with interest."

Albert rose and took his hat; the count conducted him to the door.

"I have one thing to reproach myself with," said he, stopping Albert.

"What is it?"

"I have spoken to you indiscreetly about Danglars."

"On the contrary, speak to me always in the same strain about him."

"That is enough. *Apropos*, when do you expect M. d'Epinay?"

"Five or six days hence at the latest."

"And when is he to be married?"

"Immediately on the arrival of M. and Madame de St. Meran."

"Bring him to see me. Although you say I do not like him, I assure you I shall be happy to see him."

"I will obey your orders, my lord."

"Good-bye."

"Until Saturday, when I may expect you, may I not?"

"Yes, I promised you."

The count watched Albert, waving his hand to him. When he had mounted his phaeton, Monte-Cristo turned, and seeing Bertuccio, "What news?" said he.

"She went to the Palais," replied the steward.

"Did she stay there long?"

"An hour and a half."

"Did she return home?"

"Directly."

"Well, my dear Bertuccio," said the count, "I now advise

you to go in quest of the little estate I spoke to you of in Normandy."

Bertuccio bowed, and as his wishes were in perfect harmony with the order he had received, he started the same evening.

CHAPTER LXIX.

THE INQUIRY.

M. DE VILLEFORT kept the promise he had made to Madame Danglars to endeavor to find out how the Count of Monte-Cristo had discovered the history of the house at Auteuil. He wrote the same day to M. de Boville, who, from having been an inspector of prisons, was promoted to a high office in the police, for the information he required; and the latter begged two days to ascertain exactly who would be most likely to give him full particulars.

At the end of the second day M. de Villefort received the following note:

"The person called M. le Comte de Monte-Cristo is an intimate acquaintance of Lord Wilmore, a rich foreigner, who is sometimes seen in Paris, and who is there at this moment; he is also known to the Abbé Busoni, a Sicilian priest, of high repute in the East, where he has done much good."

M. de Villefort replied by ordering the strictest inquiries to be made respecting these two persons; his orders were executed, and the following evening he received these details:

"The abbé, who was in Paris for a month, inhabited a small house behind St. Sulpice, composed of one single story over the ground floor; two rooms were on each floor, and he was the only tenant. The two lower rooms consisted of a dining-room, with a table, chairs, and sideboard

of walnut-tree, and a wainscoted parlor, without ornaments, carpet, or timepiece. It was evident the abbé limited himself to objects of strict necessity.

"It was true the abbé preferred the sitting-room upstairs, which, being furnished with theological books and parchments, in which he delighted to bury himself during whole months, was more a library than a parlor. His valet looked at the visitors through a sort of wicket, and if their countenance was unknown to him or displeased him, he replied that M. l'abbé was not in Paris, an answer which satisfied most persons, because the abbé was known to be a great traveller. Besides, whether at home or not, whether in Paris or Cairo, the abbé always left something to give away, which the valet distributed through this wicket in his master's name.

"The other room near the library was a bedroom. A bed without curtains, four armchairs, and a couch, covered with yellow Utrecht velvet, composed, with a *prie-dieu*, all its furniture.

"Lord Wilmore resided in the Rue Fontaine Saint George. He was one of those English tourists who consume a large fortune in travelling. He hired the apartment in which he lived furnished, passed only a few hours in the day there, and rarely slept there. One of his peculiarities was never to speak a word of French, which he however wrote with great purity."

The day after these important particulars had been furnished to M. le procureur, a man alighted from a carriage at the corner of the Rue Ferou, and, rapping at an olive-green door, asked if the Abbé Busoni were within.

"No, he went out early this morning," replied the valet.

"I might not always be contented with that answer," replied the visitor, "for I come from one to whom every one must be at home. But have the kindness to give the Abbé Busoni ——"

"I told you he was not at home," repeated the valet.

"Then, on his return, give him that card and this sealed paper. Will he be at home at eight o'clock this evening?"

"Doubtless, unless he is at work, which is the same as if he were out."

"I will come again at that time," replied the visitor, who then retired.

At the appointed hour the same man returned in the same carriage, which, instead of stopping this time at the end of the Rue Ferou, drove up to the green door. He knocked, and it was opened immediately to admit him.

From the signs of respect the valet paid him, he saw his note had produced a good effect.

"Is the abbé at home?" asked he.

"Yes; he is at work in his library, but he expects you, sir," replied the valet.

The stranger ascended a rough staircase, and before a table, whose surface was illumined by a lamp, whose light was concentrated by a large shade, while the rest of the apartment was in partial darkness, he perceived the abbé in a monk's dress, with a cowl on his head, such as was used by learned men of the middle age.

"Have I the honor of addressing the Abbé Busoni?" asked the visitor.

"Yes, sir," replied the abbé; "and are you the person whom M. de Boville, formerly an inspector of prisons, sends to me from the prefect of police?"

"Exactly, sir."

"One of the agents appointed to secure the safety of Paris?"

"Yes, sir," replied the stranger, with a slight hesitation, and blushing.

The abbé replaced the large spectacles, which covered not only his eyes, but his temples, and sitting down, motioned to his visitor to do the same.

"I am at your service, sir," said the abbé, with a marked Italian accent.

"The mission with which I am charged, sir," replied the visitor, speaking with hesitation, "is a confidential one on the part of him who fulfills it, and him by whom he is employed."

The abbé bowed.

"Your probity," continued the stranger, "is so well known to the prefect that he wishes, as a magistrate, to ascertain from you some particulars connected with the public safety, to ascertain which I am deputed to see you. It is hoped that no ties of friendship or humane consideration will induce you to conceal the truth."

"Provided, sir, the particulars you wish for do not interfere with my scruples or my conscience. I am a priest, sir, and the secrets of confession, for instance, must remain between me and God, and not between me and human justice."

"Do not alarm yourself, M. l'abbé, we will duly respect your conscience."

At this moment the abbé pressed down his side of the shade, which raised it on the other, and threw a bright light on the face of the stranger, while his own remained obscured.

"Excuse me, abbé," said the envoy of the prefect of police, "but the light tries my eyes very much."

The abbé lowered the shade.

"Now, sir, I am listening — speak!"

"I will come at once to the point. Do you know the Count of Monte-Cristo?"

"You mean M. Zaccone, I presume?"

"Zaccone! — is not his name Monte-Cristo?"

"Monte-Cristo is the name of an estate, or rather of a rock, and not a family name."

"Well, be it so — let us not dispute about words; and since M. de Monte-Cristo and M. Zaccone are the same —"

"Absolutely the same."

"Let us speak of M. Zaccone."

"Agreed."

"I asked you if you knew him?"

"Extremely well."

"Who is he?"

"The son of a rich ship-builder in Malta."

"I know that is the report, but, as you are aware, the police does not content itself with vague reports."

"However," replied the abbé, with an affable smile, "when that report is in accordance with the truth, everybody must believe it, the police as well as all the rest."

"Are you sure of what you assert?"

"What do you mean by that question?"

"Understand, sir, I do not in the least suspect your veracity; I ask you, are you certain of it?"

"I knew his father, M. Zaccone!"

"Ah! ah!"

"And when a child I often played with the son in the timber-yards."

"But whence does he derive the title of count?"

"You are aware that may be bought."

"In Italy?"

"Everywhere."

"And his immense riches, whence does he procure them?"

"They may not, perhaps, be so very great."

"How much do you suppose he possesses?"

"From 150,000 to 200,000 livres per annum."

"That is reasonable," said the visitor; "I have heard he had three or four millions."

"Two hundred thousand per annum would make four millions of capital."

"But I was told he had four millions per annum?"

"That is not probable."

"Do you know his island of Monte-Cristo?"

"Certainly; every one who has returned from Palermo, from Naples, or from Rome to France, by sea, must

know it, since he has passed close to it, and must have seen it."

"I am told it is a delightful place?"

"It is a rock."

"And why has the count bought a rock?"

"For the sake of being a count. In Italy one must have a county to be a count."

"You have, doubtless, heard the adventures of M. Zaccone's youth?"

"The father's?"

"No, the son's."

"I know nothing certain; at that period of his life, I lost sight of my young comrade."

"Did he go to war?"

"I think he entered the service."

"In what force?"

"In the navy."

"Are you not his confessor?"

"No, sir; I believe he is a Lutheran."

"A Lutheran?"

"I say, I believe such is the case, I do not confirm it; besides, liberty of conscience is established in France."

"Doubtless; we are not now inquiring into his creed, but his actions; in the name of the prefect of police, I demand what you know of him?"

"He passes for a very charitable man. Our holy father, the pope, has made him a Knight of Jesus Christ for the services he has rendered to the Christians in the East; he has five or six rings as testimonials from Eastern monarchs of his services."

"Does he wear them?"

"No, but he is proud of them; he is better pleased with rewards given to the benefactors of man than to his destroyers."

"He is a Quaker, then?"

"Exactly; he is a Quaker, with the exception of the peculiar dress."

"Has he any friends?"

"Yes, every one who knows him is his friend."

"But has he any enemies?"

"One only."

"What is his name?"

"Lord Wilmore."

"Where is he?"

"He is in Paris just now."

"Can he give me any particulars?"

"Important ones; he was in India with Zaccone."

"Do you know his abode?"

"It is somewhere in la Chaussée d'Antin, but I know neither the street nor the number."

"Are you at variance with the Englishman?"

"I love Zaccone, and he hates him; we are consequently not friends."

"Do you think the Count of Monte-Cristo has ever been in France before he made this visit to Paris?"

"To that question I can answer positively; no, sir, he has never been, because he applied to me six months since for the particulars he required, and as I knew not when I might again come to Paris, I recommended M. Cavalcanti to him."

"Andrea?"

"No, Bartolomeo, his father."

"Now, sir," said the visitor, impressively, "I have but one more question to ask, and I charge you, in the name of honor, of humanity, and of religion, to answer me candidly."

"What is it, sir?"

"Do you know with what design M. de Monte-Cristo purchased a house at Auteuil?"

"Certainly, for he told me."

"What was it, sir?"

"To make a lunatic asylum of it similar to that founded by the Count of Pisani at Palermo."

"Do you know that edifice?"

"I have heard of it. It is a magnificent institution."

Having said this, the abbé bowed, to imply he wished to pursue his studies.

The visitor either understood the abbé's meaning, or he had no more questions to ask; he therefore rose, and the abbé accompanied him to the door.

"You are a great alms-giver," said the visitor, "and although you are said to be rich, I will venture to offer you something for your poor people; will you accept my offering?"

"I thank you, sir; I am only jealous of one thing, namely, that the relief I give should be entirely from my own resources."

"However ——"

"My resolution, sir, is unchangeable; however, you have only to search for yourself, and you will find, alas! but too many objects upon whom to exercise your benevolence."

The abbé once more bowed as he opened the door, the stranger bowed and took his leave; and the carriage conducted him straight to the house of M. de Villefort.

An hour afterwards the carriage was again ordered, and this time it went to the Rue Fontaine Saint George, and stopped at No. 5, where Lord Wilmore lived.

The stranger had written to Lord Wilmore, requesting an interview, which the latter had fixed for ten o'clock.

As the envoy of the prefect of police arrived ten minutes before ten, he was told that Lord Wilmore, who was precision and punctuality personified, was not yet come in, but that he would be sure to return as the clock struck.

The visitor was introduced into the drawing-room, which was like all other furnished drawing-rooms. A mantel-piece, with two modern Sevres vases, a timepiece representing Cupid with his bent bow, a looking-glass, with an engraving on each side, one representing Homer carrying his guide, the other Belisarius begging; a grayish paper,

red and black tapestry — such was the appearance of Lord Wilmore's drawing-room.

It was illuminated by lamps with ground-glass shades, which gave only a feeble light, as if out of consideration for the envoy's weak sight.

After ten minutes' expectation the clock struck ten; at the fifth stroke the door opened, and Lord Wilmore appeared.

He was rather above the middle height, with thin, reddish whiskers, light complexion, and light hair, turning rather gray. He was dressed with all the English peculiarity, namely, in a blue coat with gilt buttons and high collar, in the fashion of 1811, a white kerseymere waistcoat, and nankeen pantaloons, three inches too short, but which were prevented by straps from slipping up to the knee. His first remark on entering was:

"You know, sir, I do not speak French?"

"I know you do not like to converse in our language," replied the envoy.

"But you may use it," replied Lord Wilmore; "I understand it."

"And I," replied the visitor, changing his idiom, "know enough of English to keep up the conversation. Do not put yourself to the slightest inconvenience."

"Heigh-ho!" said Lord Wilmore, with that tone which is only known to natives of Great Britain.

The envoy presented his letter of introduction, which his lordship read with English coolness; and having finished:

"I understand," said he, "perfectly."

Then began the questions, which were similar to those which had been addressed to the Abbé Busoni. But as Lord Wilmore, in the character of the count's enemy, was less restrained in his answers, they were more numerous; he described the youth of Monte-Cristo, who, he said, at ten years of age, entered the service of one of those petty sovereigns of India who make war on the English;

it was there Wilmore had first met him and fought against him; in that war Zaccone had been taken prisoner, sent to England, put on the pontoon, whence he had escaped by swimming. Then began his travels, his duels, his passions, then came the insurrection in Greece, and he had served in the Grecian ranks. While in that service he had discovered a silver mine in the mountains of Thessaly, but he had been careful to conceal it from every one. After the battle of Navarino, when the Greek government was consolidated, he asked of King Otto a mining grant for that district, which was given him. Hence that immense fortune, which might, in Lord Wilmore's opinion, amount to one or two millions per annum, a precarious fortune, which might be momentarily lost by the failure of the mine.

"But," asked the visitor, "do you know why he came to France?"

"He is speculating in railways," said Lord Wilmore; "and being a clever theorist, he has discovered a new telegraph, which he is seeking to bring to perfection."

"How much does he spend yearly?" asked the prefect.

"Not more than five or six hundred francs," said Lord Wilmore; "he is a miser."

Hatred evidently inspired the Englishman, who, knowing no other reproach to bring on the count, accused him of avarice.

"Do you know his house at Auteuil?"

"Certainly."

"What do you know respecting it?"

"Do you wish to know why he bought it?"

"Yes."

"The count is a speculator, who will certainly ruin himself in experiments. He supposes there is in the neighborhood of the house he has bought a mineral spring, equal to those at Bagnères, Luchon, and Canterests. He is going to turn his house into a *bad-haus*, as the Germans term it. He has already dug up all the garden two or three

times, to find the famous spring, and being unsuccessful, he will soon purchase all the contiguous houses. Now, as I dislike him, and hope his railway, his electric telegraph, or his search for baths, will ruin him, I am watching for his discomfiture, which must soon take place."

"What was the cause of your quarrel?"

"When in England he seduced the wife of one of my friends."

"Why do you not seek revenge?"

"I have already fought three duels with him," said the Englishman; "the first with the pistol, the second the sword, and the third with the two-handed sword."

"And what was the result of those duels?"

"The first time he broke my arm, the second time he wounded me in the breast, and the third time made this large wound."

The Englishman turned down his shirt collar, and showed a scar, whose redness proved it to be a recent one.

"So that, you see, there is a deadly feud between us."

"But," said the envoy, "you do not go the way to kill him, if I understand right."

"Heigh-ho!" said the Englishman, "I practise shooting every day, and every other day Grisier comes to my house."

This was all the visitor wished to ascertain, or, rather, all the Englishman appeared to know. The agent rose, and having bowed to Lord Wilmore, who returned his salutation with stiff politeness, he retired.

Lord Wilmore, having heard the door close after him, returned to his bedroom, where with one hand he pulled off his light hair, his red whiskers, his false jaw, and the wound, to resume his own black hair, the dark complexion, and the pearly teeth of the Count of Monte-Cristo.

It was M. de Villefort, and not the prefect, who

returned to the house of M. de Villefort. The procureur du roi felt more at ease, although he had learned nothing really satisfactory, and, for the first time since the dinner-party at Auteuil, he slept soundly.

CHAPTER LXX.

THE BALL.

It was in the warmest days of July, when, in due course of time, the Saturday arrived upon which the ball of M. de Morcerf was to take place. It was ten o'clock at night; the large trees in the garden of the count's hotel threw up their branches towards the azure canopy of heaven, studded with golden stars, but where the last mists of a storm, which had threatened all day, yet glided.

From the apartments on the ground floor might be heard the sound of music, with the whirl of the waltz and the galop, while brilliant streams of light shone through the openings of the Venetian blinds.

At this moment the garden was only occupied by about ten servants, who had just received orders from their mistress to prepare supper, the serenity of the weather continuing to increase. Until now it had been undecided whether the supper should take place in the dining-room or under a long tent erected on the lawn; but the beautiful blue sky, covered with stars, had determined the case in favor of the lawn. The gardens were illuminated with colored lanterns, according to the Italian custom, and, as is usual in those countries where the luxuries of the table are well understood, the supper-table was loaded with wax-lights and flowers.

At the time the Countess de Morcerf returned to the rooms, after giving her orders, many guests were arriving, more attracted by the charming hospitality of the countess than by the distinguished position of the count; for, owing

to the good taste of Mercedes, one was sure of finding some arrangements at her *fête* worthy of relating, or even copying, in case of need.

Madame Danglars, in whom the events we have related had caused deep anxiety, had hesitated in going to Madame de Morcerf's, when during the morning her carriage happened to cross that of De Villefort. The latter made a sign, and the carriages having drawn close together, he said : —

"You are going to Madame de Morcerf's, are you not?"

"No," replied Madame Danglars, "I am too ill."

"You are wrong," replied Villefort, significantly; "it is important that you should be seen there."

"Do you think so?" demanded the baroness.

"I do."

"In that case I will go."

And the two carriages passed on towards their different destinations. Madame Danglars, therefore, came, not only beautiful in person, but radiant with splendor; she entered by one door at the same time that Mercedes appeared at the other. The countess took Albert to meet Madame Danglars; he approached, paid some well-merited compliments on her toilet, and offered his arm to conduct her to a seat. Albert looked around him.

"You are looking for my daughter?" said the baroness, smiling.

"I confess it," replied Albert; "could you have been so cruel as not to bring her?"

"Calm yourself; she has met Mademoiselle de Villefort, and has taken her arm; see, they are following us, both in white dresses, one with a bouquet of camellias, the other with one of myosotis. But tell me ——"

"Well, what do you want to know?"

"Will not the Count of Monte-Cristo be here to-night?"

"Seventeen!" replied Albert.

"What do you mean?"

"I only mean that the count seems the rage," replied the viscount, smiling, "and that you are the seventeenth person that has asked me the same question: the count is in fashion, I congratulate him upon it."

"And have you replied to every one as you have to me?"

"Ah! to be sure, I have not answered you; be satisfied, we shall have this 'lion' — we are among the privileged ones."

"Were you at the opera yesterday?"

"No."

"He was there."

"Ah! indeed. And did the eccentric person commit any new originality?"

"Can he be seen without doing so? Elssler was dancing in *le Diable Boiteux*; the Greek princess was in ecstasies. After the cachucha he placed a magnificent ring on the stem of a bouquet, and threw it to the charming *danseuse*, who in the third act, to do honor to the gift, reappeared with it on her finger. And the Greek princess, will she be here?"

"No, you will be deprived of that pleasure; her position in the count's establishment is not sufficiently understood."

"Wait, leave me here, and go and speak to Madame de Villefort, who is longing to engage your attention."

Albert bowed to Madame Danglars, and advanced towards Madame de Villefort, whose lips opened as he approached.

"I wager anything," said Albert, interrupting her, "that I know what you were about to say."

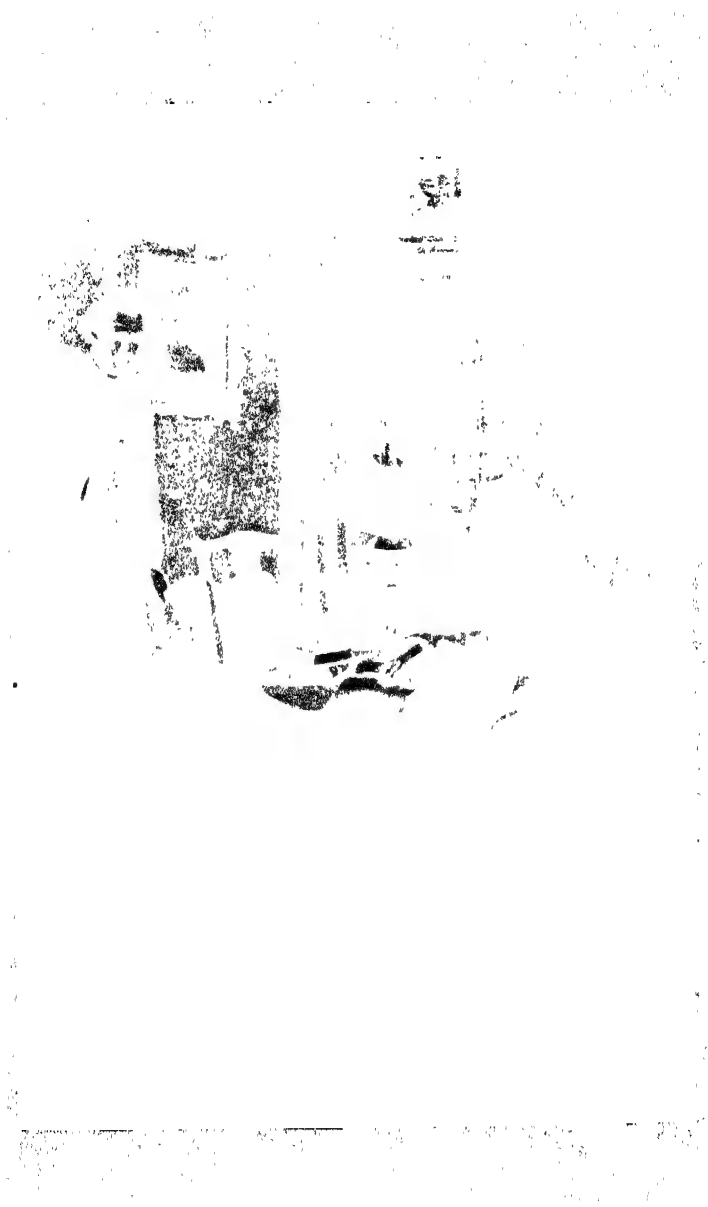
"Well, what is it?"

"If I guess rightly, will you confess it?"

"Yes."

"On your honor?"

"On my honor!"



"You were going to ask me if the Count of Monte-Cristo were arrived, or expected."

"Not at all. It is not of him I am thinking. I was going to ask you if you had received any news of M. Franz?"

"Yes, yesterday."

"What did he tell you?"

"That he was leaving at the same time as his letter."

"Well — now, then, the count?"

"The count will come, be satisfied."

"You know that he has another name besides Monte-Cristo?"

"No, I did not know it."

"Monte-Cristo is the name of an island, and he has a family name."

"I never heard it."

"Well, then, I am better informed than you; his name is Zaccane."

"It is possible."

"He is a Maltese."

"That is also possible."

"The son of a shipowner."

"Really, you should relate all this aloud, you would have the greatest success."

"He served in India, discovered a mine in Thessaly, and comes to Paris to form an establishment of mineral waters at Auteuil."

"Well! I'm sure," said Morcerf; "this is indeed news! am I allowed to repeat it?"

"Yes, but cautiously; tell one thing at a time, and do not say I told you."

"Why so?"

"Because it is a secret just discovered."

"By whom?"

"The police."

"Then the news originated —"

"At the prefect's last night. Paris, you can understand,

is astonished at the sight of such unusual splendor, and the police have made inquiries."

"Good! nothing more is wanting than to arrest the count as a vagabond, on the pretext of his being too rich."

"Indeed, this would doubtless have happened if his credentials had not been so favorable."

"Poor count! and is he aware of the danger he has been in?"

"I think not."

"Then it will be but charitable to inform him. When he arrives, I will not fail to do so."

Just then a handsome young man, with bright eyes, black hair, and glossy moustache, respectfully bowed to Madame de Villefort. Albert extended him his hand.

"Madame," said Albert, "allow me to present to you M. Maximilian Morrel, captain of Spahis, one of our best, and, above all, of our bravest officers."

"I have already had the pleasure of meeting this gentleman at Auteuil, at the house of the Count of Monte-Cristo," replied Madame de Villefort, turning away with marked coldness of manner.

This answer, and, above all, the tone in which it was uttered, chilled the heart of poor Morrel; but a recompense was in store for him; turning around, he saw near the door a beautiful fair face, whose large blue eyes were without any marked expression, fixed upon him, while the bouquet of myosotis was gently raised to the lips.

The salutation was so well understood, that Morrel, with the same expression in his eyes, placed his handkerchief to his mouth; and these two living statues, whose hearts beat so violently under their marble aspect, separated from each other by the whole length of the room, forgot themselves for a moment, or rather forgot the world, in their mutual contemplation.

They might have remained much longer lost in one another without any one noticing their abstraction. The Count of Monte-Cristo had just entered. We have already

said that there was something in the count which attracted universal attention wherever he appeared; it was not the coat, unexceptionable in its cut, though simple and unornamented; it was not the plain white waistcoat; it was not the trousers, that displayed the foot so perfectly formed; it was none of these things that attracted the attention; it was his pale complexion, his wavy black hair; it was the expression, so calm and serene; it was the eye, so dark and melancholy; it was the mouth, chiselled with such marvellous delicacy, which so easily expressed such high disdain — these were what fixed all eyes upon him.

Many men might have been handsomer; but certainly there could be none whose appearance was more *significant*, if the expression may be used. Everything about the count seemed to have its meaning; for the constant habit of thought which he had acquired had given an ease and vigor to the expression of his face, and even to the most trifling gesture, scarcely to be understood. Yet the Parisian world is so strange, that even all this might not have won attention, had there not been, besides this, a mysterious story, gilded by an immense fortune.

Meanwhile he advanced through the crowd of curious glances and exchange of salutations towards Madame de Morcerf, who, standing before a mantel-piece, ornamented with flowers, had seen his entrance in a looking-glass placed opposite the door, and was prepared to receive him. She turned towards him with a serene smile just at the moment he was bowing to her. No doubt she fancied the count would speak to her, while on his side the count thought she was about to address him, but both remained silent; and after a mere bow, Monte-Cristo directed his steps to Albert, who received him cordially.

"Have you seen my mother?" asked Albert.

"I have just had the pleasure," replied the count, "but I have not seen your father."

"See, he is down there, talking politics with that little group of great geniuses."

"Indeed!" said Monte-Cristo; "and so those gentlemen down there are men of great talent? I should not have doubted it. And for what kind of talent are they celebrated? You know there are different sorts."

"That tall, harsh-looking man is very learned; he discovered in the neighborhood of Rome a kind of lizard with a vertebra more than usual, and he immediately laid his discovery before the Institute. The thing was discussed for a long time, but finally decided in his favor. I can assure you the vertebra made a great noise in the learned world; and the gentleman, who was only a knight of the Legion of Honor, was made an officer."

"Come!" said Monte-Cristo, "this cross seems to me to be wisely awarded. Had he found another additional vertebra, I suppose they would have made him a commander."

"Very likely," said Albert.

"And who can that person be who has taken it into his head to wrap himself up in a blue coat embroidered with green?"

"Oh, that coat is not his own idea; it is the Republic's, which deputed David to draw a uniform for the Academicians."

"Indeed!" said Monte-Cristo; "so this gentleman is an Academician?"

"Within the last week he has been made one of the learned assembly."

"And what is his especial talent?"

"His talent? I believe he thrusts pins through the heads of rabbits, makes fowls eat madder, and keeps back the spinal marrow of dogs with whalebone."

"And he is made a member of the Academy of Sciences for this?"

"No, of the French Academy."

"But what has the French Academy to do with all this?"

"I was going to tell you. It seems ——"

"That his experiments have very considerably advanced the cause of science, doubtless?"

"No; that his style of writing is very good."

"This must be very flattering to the feelings of the rabbits into whose heads he has thrust pins, to the fowls whose bones he has dyed red, and to the dogs whose spinal marrow he has repelled."

Albert laughed.

"And the other one?" demanded the count.

"That one?"

"Yes, the third."

"Ah! in the dark-blue coat?"

"Yes."

"He is a colleague of the count, and one of the warmest opponents to the Chamber of Peers having a uniform; he was very successful upon that question; he stood badly with the liberal papers, but his noble opposition to the wishes of the court has recommended him to them; they talk of making him an ambassador."

"And what are his claims to the peerage?"

"He has composed two or three comic operas, written four or five articles in the *Siccle*, and voted five or six years for the minister."

"Bravo, viscount!" said Monte-Cristo, smiling; "you are a delightful cicerone; and now you will do me a favor, will you not?"

"What is it?"

"Do not introduce me to any of these gentlemen, and should they wish it, you will warn me."

Just then the count felt his arm pressed; he turned around — it was Danglars.

"Ah! is it you, baron?" said he.

"Why do you call me baron?" said Danglars; "you know that I care nothing for my title. I am not like you, viscount — you like your title, do you not?"

"Certainly," replied Albert, "seeing that, without my

title, I should be nothing, while you, sacrificing the baron, would still remain the millionaire."

"Which seems to me the finest title under the royalty of July," replied Danglars.

"Unfortunately," said Monte-Cristo, "one's title to a millionaire does not last for life, like that of baron, peer of France, or Academician; for example, the millionaires Frank and Poulmann, of Frankfort, who have just become bankrupts."

"Indeed!" said Danglars, becoming pale.

"Yes; I received the news this evening by a courier. I had about a million in their hands, but, warned in time, I withdrew it a month ago."

"Ah!" exclaimed Danglars; "they have drawn on me for 200,000 francs."

"Well, you can guard against it; their signature is worth five per cent."

"Yes; but it is too late," said Danglars, "I have honored their bills."

"Good!" said Monte-Cristo, "here are 200,000 francs gone after ——"

"Hush! Do not mention these things," said Danglars; then approaching Monte-Cristo, he added, "especially before young Cavalcanti;" after which he smiled and turned towards the young man in question.

Albert had left the count to speak to his mother, Danglars to converse with young Cavalcanti — Monte-Cristo was for an instant alone. Meanwhile the heat became excessive. The footmen were hastening through the rooms with waiters loaded with ices. Monte-Cristo wiped the perspiration from his forehead, but drew back when the waiter was presented to him; he took no refreshment. Madame de Morcerf lost not sight of Monte-Cristo. She saw that he took nothing, and even noticed the movement with which he withdrew from it.

"Albert," she asked, "did you notice that?"

"What, mother?"

"That the count will never accept an invitation to dine with us."

"Yes; but then, he breakfasted with me—indeed, he made his first appearance in the world on that occasion."

"But the house is not M. de Morcerf's," murmured Mercedes, "and since he has been here I have watched him."

"Well?"

"Well, he has taken nothing yet."

"The count is very temperate."

Mercedes smiled sadly.

"Approach him," said she, "and the next waiter that passes, insist upon his taking something."

"But why, mother?"

"Oblige me, Albert," said Mercedes.

Albert kissed his mother's hand, and drew near to the count. Another salver passed, loaded as the preceding ones. She saw Albert attempt to persuade the count, but he obstinately refused. Albert rejoined his mother; she was very pale.

"Well," said she, "you see he refuses?"

"Yes; but why need this annoy you?"

"You know, Albert, women are singular creatures. I should like to have seen the count take something in my house, if only a morsel of pomegranate. Perhaps he cannot reconcile himself to the French style of living, and might prefer something else."

"Oh, no! I have seen him eat of everything in Italy; no doubt he does not feel inclined this evening."

"And besides," said the countess, "accustomed as he is to burning climates, possibly he does not feel the heat as we do."

"I do not think that, for he has complained of feeling almost suffocated, and asked why the Venetian blinds were not opened as well as the windows."

"In a word," said Mercedes, "it is a way of assuring me that his abstinence was intended."

And she left the room. A minute afterwards the blinds were thrown open, and through the jasmine and clematis that overhung the window might be seen the garden ornamented with lanterns, and the supper laid under the tent. Dancers, players, talkers, all uttered an exclamation of joy, every one hailed with delight the breeze that floated in. At the same time Mercedes reappeared, paler than before, but with that immovable expression of countenance which she sometimes wore. She went straight to the group of which her husband formed the centre.

"Do not detain these gentlemen here, count," she said; "they would prefer, I should think, to breathe in the garden, rather than suffocate here, since they are not playing."

"Ah!" said a gallant old general, who in 1809 had sung "*Partant pour la Syrie*," "we will not go alone to the garden."

"Then," said Mercedes, "I will lead the way." Turning towards Monte-Cristo, she added, "Count, will you oblige me with your arm?"

The count almost staggered at these simple words; then he fixed his eyes on Mercedes. It was but the glance of a moment, but it seemed to the countess to have lasted for a century, so much was expressed in that one look. He offered her his arm; she leaned upon it, or rather just touched it with her little hand, and they together descended the steps, lined with rhododendrons and camellias. Behind them, by another outlet, a group of about twenty persons rushed into the garden with loud exclamations of delight.

CHAPTER LXXI.

BREAD AND SALT.

MADAME DE MORCERF entered an archway of trees with her companion; it was a grove of lindens, conducting to a conservatory.

"It was too warm in the room, was it not, count?" she asked.

"Yes, madame; and it was an excellent idea of yours to open the doors and the blinds."

As he ceased speaking, the count felt the hand of Mercedes tremble.

"But you," he said, "with that light dress, and without anything to cover you but that gauze scarf, — perhaps you feel cold?"

"Do you know where I am leading you?" asked the countess, without replying to the question of Monte-Cristo.

"No, madame," replied Monte-Cristo, "but you see I make no resistance."

"We are going to the green-house that you see at the end of this grove."

The count looked at Mercedes as if to interrogate her, but she continued walking in silence; on his side, Monte-Cristo also said nothing. They reached the building, ornamented with magnificent fruits, which ripen even in July, in the artificial temperature which takes the place of the sun, so frequently absent in our climate. The countess left the arm of Monte-Cristo, and gathered a bunch of Muscatel grapes.

"See, count," she said, with a smile, so sad in its expression, that one could almost see tears on her eyelids — "see, our French grapes are not to be compared, I know, with yours of Sicily and Cyprus, but you will make allowance for our northern sun."

The count bowed, and stepped back.

"Do you refuse?" said Mercedes, in a tremulous voice.

"Pray excuse me, madame," replied Monte-Cristo, "but I never eat Muscatel grapes."

Mercedes let them fall, and sighed. A magnificent peach was hanging against an adjoining wall, ripened by the same artificial heat. Mercedes drew near, and plucked the fruit.

"Take this peach, then," she said.

The count again refused.

"What, again!" she exclaimed, in so plaintive an accent that it seemed but to stifle a sob; "really, you pain me."

A long silence succeeded this scene; the peach, like the grapes, was rolling on the ground.

"Count," said Mercedes, with a supplicating glance, "there is a beautiful Arabian custom which makes eternal friends of those who have together eaten bread and salt beneath the same roof."

"I know it, madame," replied the count; "but we are in France, and not in Arabia; and in France eternal friendships are as rare as the custom of dividing bread and salt with one another."

"But," said the countess, breathlessly, with her eyes fixed on Monte-Cristo, whose arm she convulsively pressed with both hands, "we are friends, are we not?"

The count became pale as death, the blood rushed to his heart, and then again rising, dyed his cheeks with crimson; his eyes swam like those of a man suddenly dazzled.

"Certainly we are friends," he replied; "why should we not be such?"

The answer was so little like the one Mercedes desired,

that she turned away to give vent to a sigh, which sounded more like a groan.

"Thank you," she said.

And they recommenced walking. They went the whole length of the garden without uttering a word.

"Sir," suddenly exclaimed the countess, after their walk had continued ten minutes in silence, "is it true that you have seen so much, travelled so far, and suffered so deeply?"

"I have suffered deeply, madame," answered Monte-Cristo.

"But now you are happy?"

"Doubtless," replied the count, "since no one hears me complain."

"And your present happiness, has it softened your heart?"

"My present happiness equals my past misery," said the count.

"Are you not married?" asked the countess.

"I! married!" exclaimed Monte-Cristo, shuddering; "who could have told you so?"

"No one told me you were, but you have frequently been seen at the opera with a young and lovely person."

"She is a slave whom I bought at Constantinople, madame, the daughter of a prince. I have adopted her as my daughter, having no one else to love in the world."

"You live alone, then?"

"I do."

"You have no sister — no son — no father?"

"I have no one."

"How can you exist thus, without any one to attach you to life?"

"It is not my fault, madame. At Malta I loved a young girl, was on the point of marrying her, when war came and carried me away. I thought she loved me well enough to wait for me, and even to remain faithful to my

grave. When I returned she was married. This is the history of most men who have passed twenty years of age. Perhaps my heart was weaker than those of the generality, and I suffered more than they would have done in my place; you know all."

The countess stopped for a moment, as if gasping for breath.

"Yes," she said, "and you have still preserved this love in your heart — one can only love once — and did you ever see her again?"

"Never!"

"Never?"

"I never returned to the country where she lived."

"At Malta?"

"Yes; at Malta."

"She is, then, now at Malta?"

"I think so."

"And have you forgiven her for all she has made you suffer?"

"Yes, I have pardoned *her*!"

"But only her; do you, then, still hate those who separated you?"

"I hate them! not at all — why should I?"

The countess placed herself before Monte-Cristo, still holding in her hand a portion of the perfumed grapes.

"Take some," she said.

"Madame, I never eat Muscatel grapes," replied Monte-Cristo, as if the subject had not been mentioned before.

The countess dashed the grapes into the nearest thicket with a gesture of despair.

"Inflexible man!" she murmured.

Monte-Cristo remained as unmoved as if the reproach had not been addressed to him. Albert at this moment ran in.

"Oh, mother!" he exclaimed, "such a misfortune has happened!"

"What? — what has happened?" asked the countess,

as though awaking from a sleep to the realities of life; "did you say a misfortune? Indeed I should expect misfortunes."

"M. de Villefort is here."

"Well?"

"He comes to fetch his wife and daughter."

"Why so?"

"Because Madame de Saint-Meran is just arrived in Paris, bringing the news of M. de Saint-Meran's death, which took place on the first stage after he left Marseilles. Madame de Villefort, who was in very good spirits, would neither believe nor think of the misfortune; but Mademoiselle Valentine, at the first words, guessed the whole truth, notwithstanding all the precautions of her father; the blow struck her like a thunderbolt, and she fell senseless."

"And how was M. de Saint-Meran related to Mademoiselle de Villefort?" said the count.

"He was her grandfather on her mother's side. He was coming here to hasten her marriage with Franz."

"Ah! indeed!"

"Franz is delayed, then. Why is not M. de Saint-Meran also grandfather to Mademoiselle Danglars?"

"Albert! Albert!" said Madame de Morcerf, in a tone of mild reproof, "what are you saying? Ah! count, he esteems you so highly, tell him that he has spoken amiss." And she took two or three steps forward. Monte-Cristo watched her with an air so thoughtful, and so full of affectionate admiration, that she returned; taking his hand, at the same time she grasped that of her son, and joined them together.

"We are friends, are we not?" she asked.

"Oh, madame, I do not presume to call myself your friend, but at all times I am your most respectful servant." The countess left with an indescribable pang in her heart, and before she had taken ten steps, the count saw her raise her handkerchief to her eyes.

"Do not my mother and you agree?" asked Albert, astonished.

"On the contrary," replied the count, "did you not hear her declare that we were friends?"

They re-entered the drawing-room, which Valentine and Madame de Villefort had just quitted. Monte-Cristo departed almost at the same time.

CHAPTER LXXII.

MADAME DE SAINT-MERAN.

A GLOOMY scene had indeed just passed at the house of De Villefort. After the ladies had departed for the ball, whither all the entreaties of Madame de Villefort had failed in persuading him to accompany them, the procureur du roi had, as usual, shut himself up in his study, with a heap of papers calculated to alarm any one else, but which generally scarcely satisfied his inordinate desires. But this time the papers were a mere matter of form. Villefort had secluded himself, not to study, but to reflect; and with the door locked, and orders given that he should not be disturbed, excepting for important business, he sat down in his armchair, and began to ponder over those events the remembrance of which had, during the last eight days, filled his mind with so many gloomy thoughts and bitter recollections.

Then, instead of plunging into the mass of papers piled before him, he opened the drawer of his desk, touched a spring, and drew out a parcel of notes, precious documents, amongst which he had carefully arranged, in characters only known to himself, the names of all those who, either in his political career, in money matters, at the bar, or in his mysterious love-affairs, had become his enemies. Their number was formidable, now that he had begun to fear, and yet these names, powerful though they were, had often caused him to smile with the same kind of satisfaction experienced by a traveller who from the summit of a mountain beholds at his feet the craggy eminences, the almost impassable paths, and the fearful chasms through which

he has so perilously climbed. When he had run over all these names in his memory, again read and studied them, commenting meanwhile upon his lists, he shook his head.

"No!" he murmured, "none of my enemies would have waited so patiently and laboriously for so long a space of time, that they might now come and crush me with this secret. Sometimes, as Hamlet says, —

" 'Deeds will rise,
Tho' all the earth o'erwhelm them, to men's eyes ;' "

but, like phosphoric light, they rise but to mislead. The story has been told by the Corsican to some priest, who in his turn has also repeated it. M. de Monte-Cristo may have heard it, and to enlighten himself — but why should he wish to enlighten himself upon the subject?" asked Villefort, after a moment's reflection; "what interest can this M. de Monte-Cristo, M. Zaccane, son of a shipowner of Malta, discoverer of a mine in Thessaly, now visiting Paris for the first time — what interest, I say, can he take in discovering a gloomy, mysterious, and useless fact like this? However, amidst all the incoherent details given to me by the Abbé Busoni and by Lord Wilmore, by that friend and that enemy, one thing appears certain and clear in my opinion, that in no period, in no case, in no circumstance, could there have been any contact between him and me."

But Villefort uttered words which even he himself did not believe. He dreaded not the revelation so much, for he could reply to or deny its truth; he cared little for that Mene, Tekel, Peres which appeared suddenly in letters of blood upon the wall; but what he was really anxious for, was to discover whose hand had traced them. While he was endeavoring to calm his fears, and instead of dwelling upon the political future, that had so often been the subject of his ambitious dreams, was imagining a future limited to the enjoyments of home, fearing to awaken the enemy that had so long slept, the noise of a

carriage sounded in the yard; then he heard the steps of an aged person ascending the stairs, followed by tears and lamentations, such as servants always assume when they wish to appear interested in their master's grief. He drew back the bolt of his door, and almost directly an old lady entered, unannounced, carrying her shawl on her arm and her bonnet in her hand. The white hair was thrown back from her yellow forehead; and her eyes, already sunken by the furrows of age, now almost disappeared beneath the eyelids so swollen with grief.

"Oh, sir," she said — "oh, sir, what a misfortune! I shall die of it; oh, yes, I shall certainly die of it!"

And then, falling upon the chair nearest the door, she burst into a paroxysm of sobs. The servants standing in the doorway, not daring to approach nearer, were looking at Noirtier's old servant, who, having heard a noise in his master's room, had run there also, and remained behind the others. Villefort rose, and ran towards his mother-in-law, for it was she.

"Why, what can have happened?" he exclaimed; "what has thus disturbed you? Is M. de Saint-Meran with you?"

"M. de Saint-Meran is dead!" answered the old marchioness, without preface, without expression; she appeared stupefied.

Villefort drew back, and clasping his hands together, exclaimed:

"Dead! so suddenly?"

"A week ago," continued Madame de Saint-Meran, "we went out together in the carriage after dinner. M. de Saint-Meran had been unwell for some days; still, the idea of seeing our dear Valentine again inspired him with courage; and, notwithstanding his illness, he would leave; when, at six leagues from Marseilles, after having eaten some of the pastilles he is accustomed to take, he fell into such a deep sleep, that it appeared to me unnatural; still, I hesitated to wake him, when I fancied his face became

red, and that the veins in his temples throbbed more violently than usual. However, as it became dark, and I could no longer see, I fell asleep; I was soon awake by a piercing shriek, as from a person suffering in his dreams, and he suddenly threw his head back. I stopped the postilion, I called M. de Saint-Meran, I applied my smelling-salts; but all was over, and I arrived at Aix by the side of a corpse."

Villefort stood with his mouth half open, quite stupefied.

"Of course, you sent for a doctor?"

"Immediately; but, as I have told you, it was too late."

"Yes; but then he could tell of what complaint the poor marquis had died."

"Oh, yes, sir, he told me; it appears to have been an apoplectic stroke."

"And what did you then?"

"M. de Saint-Meran had always expressed a desire, in case of his death happening during his absence from Paris, that his body might be brought to the family vault. I had him put into a leaden coffin, and I am preceding him by a few days."

"Oh, my poor mother!" said De Villefort, "to have such duties to perform at your age, after such a blow!"

"God has supported me through all! And then, my dear marquis, he would certainly have done everything for me that I performed for him. It is true that since I left him, I seem to have lost my senses. I cannot cry; at my age they say that we have no more tears; still, I think when one is in trouble we should have the power of weeping. Where is Valentine, sir? It is on her account I am here; I wish to see Valentine."

Villefort thought it would be terrible to reply that Valentine was at a ball; so he only said that she had gone out with her step-mother, and that she should be fetched.

"This instant, sir — this instant, I beseech you!" said the old lady.

Villefort placed the arm of Madame de Saint-Meran within his own, and conducted her to his apartment.

"Rest yourself, mother," he said.

The marchioness raised her head at this word, and beholding the man who so forcibly reminded her of her deeply regretted child, who still lived for her in Valentine, she felt touched at the name of mother; and bursting into tears, she fell on her knees before an armchair, where she buried her venerable head.

Villefort left her to the care of the women, while old Barrois ran, half scared, to his master; for nothing frightens old men so much as when death relaxes its vigilance over them for a moment in order to strike some other old man.

Then, while Madame de Saint-Meran, still on her knees, remained praying fervently, Villefort sent for a hackney-coach, and went himself to fetch his wife and daughter from Madame de Morcerf's. He was so pale when he appeared at the door of the ball-room that Valentine ran to him, saying:

"Oh, father! some misfortune has happened!"

"Your grandmamma has just arrived, Valentine," said M. de Villefort.

"And grandpapa?" inquired the young girl, trembling with apprehension.

M. de Villefort only replied by offering his arm to his daughter. It was just in time, for Valentine's head swam, and she staggered; Madame de Villefort instantly hastened to her assistance, and aided her husband in dragging her to the carriage, saying:

"What a singular event! Who could ever have thought of it? Ah, yes — it is indeed strange!"

And the wretched family departed, leaving a cloud of sadness hanging over the rest of the evening. At the foot of the stairs, Valentine found Barrois awaiting her.

"M. Noirtier wishes to see you to-night," he said, in an undertone.

"Tell him I will come when I leave my dear grand-mamma," she replied, feeling, with true delicacy, that the person to whom she could be of the most service just then was Madame de Saint-Meran.

Valentine found her grandmother in bed; silent caresses, heart-wrung sobs, broken sighs, burning tears, were all that passed in this sad interview, while Madame de Villefort, leaning on her husband's arm, maintained all outward forms of respect, at least, towards the poor widow. She soon whispered to her husband:

"I think it would be better for me to retire, with your permission, for the sight of me appears to afflict your mother-in-law."

Madame de Saint-Meran heard her.

"Yes, yes," she said softly to Valentine, "let her leave; but do you stay."

Madame de Villefort left, and Valentine remained alone beside the bed, for the procureur du roi, overcome with astonishment at the unexpected death, had followed his wife.

Meanwhile, Barrois had returned for the first time to old Noirtier, who, having heard the noise in the house, had, as we have said, sent his old servant to inquire the cause; on his return, his quick and intelligent eye interrogated the messenger.

"Alas, sir!" exclaimed Barrois, "a great misfortune has happened. Madame de Saint-Meran has arrived, and her husband is dead!"

M. de Saint-Meran and Noirtier had never been on strict terms of friendship; still, the death of one old man always considerably affects another. Noirtier remained for a moment apparently overwhelmed and thoughtful; then, closing one eye, he looked at Barrois.

"Mademoiselle Valentine?"

Noirtier nodded his head.

"She is at the ball, as you know, since she came to say good-bye to you in full dress."

Noirtier again closed his left eye.

"Do you wish to see her?"

Noirtier again made an affirmative sign.

"Well, they have gone to fetch her, no doubt, from Madame de Morcerf's. I will await her return, and beg her to come up here. Is that what you wish for?"

"Yes," replied the invalid.

Barrois therefore, as we have seen, watched for Valentine, and informed her of her grandfather's wish. Consequently, Valentine came up to Noirtier on leaving Madame de Saint-Meran, who, in the midst of her grief, had at last yielded to fatigue and fallen into a feverish sleep. Within reach of her hand they placed a small table, upon which stood a bottle of orangeade, her usual beverage, and a glass. Then, as we have said, the young girl left the bedside to see M. Noirtier.

Valentine kissed the old man, who looked at her with such tenderness that she saw his eyes again filled with tears, whose sources she thought must be exhausted. The old gentleman continued to gaze upon her with the same expression.

"Yes, yes," said Valentine, "you mean that I have yet a kind grandfather left, do you not?"

The old man intimated that such was his meaning.

"Alas! happily I have," replied Valentine. "Without that, what would become of me?"

It was one o'clock in the morning. Barrois, who wished to go to bed himself, observed that after such sad events every one stood in need of rest. Noirtier would not say that the only rest he needed was to see his child, but wished her good night, for grief and fatigue had made her appear quite ill.

The next morning she found her grandmother in bed; the fever had not abated — on the contrary, her eyes glistened, and she appeared to be suffering from violent nervous irritability.

"Oh, dear mamma! are you worse?" exclaimed Valentine, perceiving all these signs of agitation.

"No, my child, no!" said Madame de Saint-Meran, "but I was impatiently waiting your arrival, that I might send for your father."

"My father?" inquired Valentine, uneasily.

"Yes, I wish to speak to him."

Valentine durst not oppose her grandmother's wish, the cause of which she knew not; and an instant afterwards Villefort entered.

"Sir," said Madame de Saint-Meran, without using any circumlocution, and as if fearing she had no time to lose, "you wrote to me concerning the marriage of this child?"

"Yes, madame," said Villefort; "it is not only projected, but arranged."

"Your intended son-in-law is named M. Franz d'Epinay?"

"Yes, madame."

"Is he not the son of General d'Epinay, who was on our side, and who was assassinated some days before the usurper returned from the Isle of Elba?"

"The same."

"Does he not dislike the idea of marrying the granddaughter of a Jacobin?"

"Our civil dissensions are now happily extinguished, mother," said Villefort; "M. d'Epinay was quite a child when his father died; he knows very little of M. Noirtier, and will meet him, if not with pleasure, at least with indifference."

"Is it a suitable match?"

"In every respect."

"And the young man?"

"Possesses universal esteem."

"You approve of him?"

"He is one of the most distinguished young men I know."

During the whole of this conversation Valentine had remained silent.

"Well, sir," said Madame de Saint-Meran, after a few

minutes' reflection, "I must hasten the marriage, for I have but a short time to live."

"You, madame?" "You, dear mamma!" exclaimed M. de Villefort and Valentine at the same time.

"I know what I am saying," continued the marchioness; "I must hurry you, so that, having no mother, she may at least have a grandmother to bless her marriage. I am all that is left to her belonging to my poor Renee, whom you have so soon forgotten, sir."

"Ah, madame," said Villefort, "you forget that I was obliged to give a mother to my child."

"A step-mother is never a mother, sir. But this is not to the purpose; our business concerns Valentine; let us leave the dead in peace."

All this was said with such exceeding rapidity that there was something in the conversation that seemed like the commencement of delirium.

"It shall be as you wish, madame," said Villefort, "more especially since your wishes coincide with mine; and as soon as M. d'Epinay arrives in Paris ——"

"My dear mother," interrupted Valentine, "consider decorum — the recent death. You would not have me marry under such sad auspices?"

"My child," exclaimed the old lady, sharply, "let us hear none of those conventional objections that deter weak minds from forming their fortunes. I also was married at the death-bed of my mother, and certainly I have not been less happy on that account."

"Still that idea of death, madame!" said Villefort.

"Still? — Always! I tell you I am going to die — do you understand? Well, before dying, I wish to see Valentine's lover. I wish to tell him to make my child happy; I wish to read in his eyes whether he intends to obey me; in fact, I will know him — I will!" continued the old lady, with a fearful expression, "that I may rise from the depths of my grave to find him if he should not fulfil his duty."

"Madame," said Villefort, "you must lay aside these exalted ideas, which almost assume the appearance of madness. The dead, once buried in their graves, rise no more."

"And I tell you, sir, that you are mistaken. This night I have had a fearful sleep. It seemed as though my soul were already hovering over my body; my eyes, which I tried to open, closed against my will; and what will appear impossible above all to you, sir, I saw, with my eyes shut, in the spot where you are now standing, issuing from that corner where there is a door leading into Madame de Villefort's dressing-room — I saw, I tell you, silently enter a white figure."

Valentine screamed.

"It was the fever that disturbed you, madame," said Villefort.

"Doubt, if you please, but I am sure of what I say. I saw a white figure; and, as if to prevent my discrediting the testimony of only one of my senses, I heard my glass removed — the same which is there now on the table."

"Oh! dear mother, it was a dream."

"So little was it a dream, that I stretched my hand towards the bell; but when I did so, the shade disappeared; my maid then entered with a light."

"But she saw no one?"

"Phantoms are visible to those only who ought to see them. It was the soul of my husband! Well, if my husband's soul can come to me, why should not my soul reappear to guard my granddaughter? the tie is even more direct, it seems to me."

"Oh! madame," said Villefort, deeply affected, in spite of himself, "do not yield to those gloomy thoughts; you will long live with us, happy, loved, and honored, and we will make you forget ——"

"Never, never!" said the marchioness. "When does M. d'Epinay arrive?"

"We expect him every moment."

"It is well; as soon as he arrives, inform me. We must be expeditious. And then I also wish to see a notary, that I may be assured that all our property returns to Valentine."

"Ah, my mother!" murmured Valentine, pressing her lips on the burning brow of her grandmother, "do you wish to kill me? Oh, how feverish you are! we must not send for a notary, but for a doctor!"

"A doctor!" said she, shrugging her shoulders, "I am not ill; I am thirsty, that is all."

"What are you drinking, dear mamma?"

"The same as usual, my dear; my glass is there on the table — give it me, Valentine."

Valentine poured the orangeade into a glass, and gave it to her grandmother, with a certain degree of dread, for it was the same glass, she fancied, that had been touched by the spectre. The marchioness drained the glass at a single draught, and then turned on her pillow, repeating:

"The notary! the notary!"

M. de Villefort left the room, and Valentine seated herself at the bedside of her grandmother. The poor child appeared herself to require the doctor she had recommended to her aged relative. A burning spot flushed her cheek, her respiration was short and difficult, and her pulse beat with feverish excitement. She was thinking of the despair of Maximilian, when informed that Madame de Saint-Meran, instead of being an ally, was unconsciously acting as his enemy. More than once she thought of revealing all to her grandmother, and she would not have hesitated a single moment if Maximilian Morrel had been named Albert de Morcerf or Raoul de Château-Renaud; but Morrel was of plebeian extraction, and Valentine knew how the haughty Marquise de Saint-Meran despised all who were not noble. Her secret had each time been repressed, when

she was about to reveal it, by the sad conviction that it would be useless to do so; were it once discovered by her father and mother, all would be lost. Two hours passed thus; Madame de Saint-Meran was in a feverish sleep, and the notary had arrived. Though announced in a very low tone, Madame de Saint-Meran arose from her pillow.

"The notary!" she exclaimed; "let him come in."

The notary, who was at the door, immediately entered.

"Go, Valentine," said Madame de Saint-Meran, "and leave me with this gentleman."

"But, mother ——"

"Leave me! — go!"

The young girl kissed her grandmother, and left with her handkerchief to her eyes; at the door she found the valet de chambre, who told her the doctor was waiting in the dining-room. Valentine instantly ran down. The doctor was a friend of the family, and at the same time one of the cleverest men of the day; and very fond of Valentine, whose birth he had witnessed. He had himself a daughter about her age, but whose life was one continued source of anxiety and fear to him, from her mother having been consumptive.

"Oh," said Valentine, "we have been waiting for you with such impatience, dear M. d'Avrigny. But, first of all, how are Madeleine and Antoinette?"

Madeleine was the daughter of M. d'Avrigny, and Antoinette his niece. M. d'Avrigny smiled sadly.

"Antoinette is very well," he said, "and Madeleine tolerably so. But you sent for me, my dear child. It is not your father or Madame de Villefort who is ill? As for you, although we doctors cannot divest our patients of nerves, I fancy you have no further need of me than to recommend you not to allow your imagination to take too wide a field."

Valentine colored. M. d'Avrigny carried the science of divination almost to a miracle, for he was one of those

doctors who always work upon the body through the mind.

"No," she replied, "it is for my poor grandmother; you know the calamity that has happened to us, do you not?"

"I know nothing," said M. d'Avrigny.

"Alas!" said Valentine, restraining her tears, "my grandfather is dead."

"M. de Saint-Meran?"

"Yes."

"Suddenly?"

"From an apoplectic stroke."

"An apoplectic stroke!" repeated the doctor.

"Yes; and my poor grandmother fancies that her husband, whom she never left, has called her, and that she must go and join him. Oh, M. d'Avrigny, I beseech you, do something for her!"

"Where is she?"

"In her room with the notary."

"And M. Noirtier?"

"Just as he was, his mind perfectly clear, but the same incapability of moving or speaking."

"And the same love for you — eh, my dear child?"

"Yes," said Valentine; "he is very fond of me."

"Who does not love you?"

Valentine smiled sadly.

"What are your grandmother's symptoms?"

"An extreme nervous excitement and a strangely agitated sleep; she fancied this morning in her sleep that her soul was hovering above her body, which she at the same time watched. It must have been delirium! She fancies, too, that she saw a phantom enter her chamber, and even heard the noise it made on touching her glass."

"It is singular," said the doctor; "I was not aware that Madame de Saint-Meran was subject to such hallucinations."

"It is the first time I ever saw her thus," said Valentine; "and this morning she frightened me so that I

thought her mad; and my father, who you know is a strong-minded man, himself appeared deeply impressed."

"We will go and see," said the doctor; "what you tell me seems very strange."

The notary here descended, and Valentine was informed that her grandmother was alone.

"Go upstairs," she said to the doctor.

"And you?"

"Oh, I dare not—she forbade my sending for you; and, as you say, I am myself agitated, feverish, and unwell. I will go and take a turn in the garden to recover myself."

The doctor pressed Valentine's hand, and while he visited her grandmother, she descended the steps. We need not say which portion of the garden was her favorite walk. After remaining for a short time in the *parterre* surrounding the house she strolled, for a short time, among her flowers, but without gathering them. The mourning in her heart forbade her assuming this simple ornament, though she had not yet had time to put on the outward semblance of woe. She then turned towards the avenue. As she advanced, she fancied she heard a voice pronounce her name. She stopped, astonished, then the voice reached her ear more distinctly, and she recognized it to be that of Maximilian.

CHAPTER LXXIII.

THE PROMISE.

It was indeed Maximilian Morrel, who had passed a wretched existence since the previous day. With that instinct peculiar to lovers, he had anticipated, after the return of Madame de Saint-Meran and the death of the marquis, that something would occur at M. de Villefort's in connection with his attachment for Valentine. His presentiments were realized, as we shall see, and it was his uneasy forebodings which led him, pale and trembling, to the gate under the chestnut-trees. Valentine was ignorant of the cause of his sorrow and anxiety, and as it was not his accustomed hour for visiting her, pure chance, or rather a happy sympathy, led her at the moment to that spot.

Morrel called her, and she ran to the gate.

"You here, at this hour?" said she.

"Yes, my poor girl," replied Morrel; "I come to bring and to hear bad tidings."

"This is indeed a house of mourning!" said Valentine; "speak, Maximilian, although the cup of sorrow seems already full."

"Dear Valentine," said Morrel, endeavoring to conceal his own emotion, "listen, I entreat you; what I am about to say is solemn. When are you to be married?"

"I will tell you all," said Valentine; "from you I have nothing to conceal. This morning, the subject was introduced, and my dear grandmother, on whom I depended as my only support, not only declared herself favorable to it,

but is so anxious for it, that they only await the arrival of M. d'Epinay, and the following day the contract will be signed."

A deep sigh escaped the young man, who gazed long and mournfully at her he loved.

"Alas!" replied he, "it is dreadful thus to hear my condemnation from your own lips. The sentence is passed, and in a few hours will be executed; it must be so, and I will not endeavor to prevent it. But, since you say nothing remains but for M. d'Epinay to arrive that the contract may be signed, and the following day you will be his, *to-morrow* you will be engaged to M. d'Epinay, for he came this morning to Paris."

Valentine uttered a cry.

"I was at the house of Monte-Cristo an hour since," said Morrel; "we were speaking, he of the sorrow your family had experienced, and I of your grief, when a carriage rolled into the courtyard. Never till then had I placed any confidence in presentiments, but now I cannot help believing them, Valentine. At the sound of that carriage I shuddered; soon I heard steps on the staircase, which terrified me as much as the footsteps of the commander did Don Juan. The door at last opened; Albert de Morcerf entered first, and I began to hope my fears were vain, when, after him, another young man advanced, and the count exclaimed:

"'Ah! M. le Baron Franz d'Epinay!'

"I summoned all my strength and courage to my support. Perhaps I turned pale and trembled, but certainly I smiled; and five minutes after I left, without having heard one word that had passed."

"Poor Maximilian!" murmured Valentine.

"Valentine, the time has arrived when you must answer me. And remember, my life depends on your answer. What do you intend doing?"

Valentine hung down her head; she was overwhelmed.

"Listen!" said Morrel; "it is not the first time you

have contemplated our present position, which is a serious and urgent one; I do not think it is a moment to give way to useless sorrow; leave that for those who like to suffer at their leisure and indulge their grief in secret. There are such in the world, and God will doubtless reward them in heaven for their resignation on earth; but those who mean to contend must not lose one precious moment, but must return immediately the blow which fortune strikes. Do you intend to struggle against our ill-fortune? Tell me, Valentine, for it is that I came to know."

Valentine trembled, and looked at him with amazement. The idea of resisting her father, her grandmother, and all the family had never occurred to her.

"What do you say, Maximilian?" asked Valentine. "What do you term a struggle? Oh! it would be sacrilege. What! resist my father's order, and my dying grandmother's wish? Impossible!"

Morrel started.

"You are too noble not to understand me, and you understand me so well that you already yield, dear Maximilian. No, no! I shall need all my strength to struggle with myself and support my grief in secret, as you say. But to grieve my father—to disturb my grandmother's last moments—never!"

"You are right," said Morrel, calmly.

"In what a tone you speak!" cried Valentine.

"I speak as one who admires you, mademoiselle."

"Mademoiselle!" cried Valentine; "mademoiselle! Oh, selfish man!—he sees me in despair, and pretends he cannot understand me!"

"You mistake—I understand you perfectly. You will not oppose M. Villefort, you will not displease the marchioness, and to-morrow you will sign the contract which will bind you to your husband."

"But tell me, how can I do otherwise?"

"Do not appeal to me, mademoiselle, I shall be a bad judge in such a case; my selfishness will blind me," re-

plied Morrel, whose low voice and clinched hands announced his growing desperation.

"What would you have proposed, Morrel, had you found me willing to accede?"

"It is not for me to say."

"You are wrong; you must advise me what to do."

"Do you seriously ask my advice, Valentine?"

"Certainly, dear Maximilian, for if it is good I will follow it; you know my devotion to you."

"Valentine," said Morrel, pushing aside a plank that was split, "give me your hand in token of forgiveness for my anger; my senses are confused, and during the last hour the most extravagant thoughts have passed through my brain. Oh! if you refuse my advice——"

"What do you advise?" said Valentine, raising her eyes to heaven and sighing.

"I am free," replied Maximilian, "and rich enough to support you. I swear to make you my lawful wife before my lips even shall have approached your forehead."

"You make me tremble!" said the young girl.

"Follow me," said Morrel; "I will take you to my sister, who is worthy also to be yours. We will embark for Algiers, for England, for America, or, if you prefer it, retire to the country, and only return to Paris when our friends have reconciled your family."

Valentine shook her head.

"I feared it, Maximilian," said she; "it is the counsel of a madman, and I should be more mad than you did I not stop you at once with the word 'Impossible, Morrel, impossible!'"

"You will then submit to what fate decrees for you without even attempting to contend with it?" said Morrel, sorrowfully.

"Yes — if I die."

"Well, Valentine," resumed Maximilian, "I again repeat, you are right. Truly, it is I who am mad; and you prove to me that passion blinds the most correct minds. I

appreciate your calm reasoning. It is then understood, to-morrow you will be irrevocably promised to M. Franz d'Epinay, not only by that theatrical formality invented to heighten the effect of a comedy called the signature of the contract, but by your own will?"

"Again you drive me to despair, Maximilian," said Valentine; "again you plunge the dagger in the wound! What would you do, tell me, if your sister listened to such a proposition?"

"Mademoiselle," replied Morrel, with a bitter smile, "I am selfish — you have already said so — and as a selfish man I think not of what others would do in my situation, but of what I intend doing myself. I think only that I have known you now a whole year. From the day I first saw you, all my hopes of happiness have been in securing your affection. One day you acknowledged that you loved me; and since that day my hope of future happiness has rested on obtaining you; for to gain you would be life to me. Now, I think no more; I say only that fortune has turned against me — I had thought to gain heaven, and now I have lost it. It is an every-day occurrence for a gambler to lose not only what he possesses, but also what he has not."

Morrel pronounced these words with perfect calmness; Valentine looked at him a moment with her large, scrutinizing eyes, endeavoring not to let Morrel discover the grief which struggled in her heart.

"But, in a word, what are you going to do?" asked she.

"I am going to have the honor of taking my leave of you, mademoiselle, solemnly assuring you that I wish your life may be so calm, so happy, and so fully occupied, that there may be no place for me even in your memory."

"Oh!" murmured Valentine.

"Adieu, Valentine, adieu!" said Morrel, bowing.

"Where are you going?" cried the young girl, extending her hand through the opening, and seizing Maximilian

by his coat, for she understood from her own agitated feelings that her lover's calmness could not be real; "where are you going?"

"I am going that I may not bring fresh trouble into your family; and to set an example which every honest and devoted man, situated as I am, may follow."

"Before you leave me, tell me what you are going to do, Maximilian."

The young man smiled sorrowfully.

"Speak! speak!" said Valentine, "I entreat you."

"Has your resolution changed, Valentine?"

"It cannot change, unhappy man! you know it must not!" cried the young girl.

"Then adieu, Valentine!"

Valentine shook the gate with a strength of which she could not have been supposed to be possessed, as Morrel was going away, and passing her hands through the opening, she clasped and wrung them.

"I must know what you mean to do," said she. "Where are you going?"

"Oh! fear not," said Maximilian, stopping at a short distance, "I do not intend to render another man responsible for the rigorous fate reserved for me. Another might threaten to seek M. Franz, to provoke him, and to fight with him; all that would be folly. What has M. Franz to do with it? He saw me this morning for the first time, and has already forgotten he has seen me. He did not even know I existed when it was arranged by your two families that you should be united. I have no enmity against M. Franz, and promise you the punishment shall not fall on him."

"On whom, then? — on me?"

"On you, Valentine! Oh, Heaven forbid! Woman is sacred — the woman one loves is holy."

"On yourself, then, unhappy man; on yourself?"

"I am the only guilty person, am I not?" said Maximilian.

"Maximilian!" said Valentine, "Maximilian, return, I entreat you!"

He drew near, with his sweet smile, and, but for his paleness, one might have thought him in his usual happy frame.

"Listen, my dear, my adored Valentine," said he, in his melodious and grave tone; "those who, like us, have never had a thought for which we need blush before the world, such may read each other's heart. I never was romantic, and am no melancholy hero. I imitate neither Manfred nor Anthony; but without words, without protestations, and, without vows, my life has entwined itself with yours; you leave me, and you are right in doing so—I repeat it, you are right; but in losing you, I lose my life. The moment you leave me, Valentine, I am alone in the world. My sister is happily married; her husband is only my brother-in-law, that is, a man whom the ties of social life alone attach to me; no one then longer needs my useless life. This is what I shall do; I will wait until the very moment you are married—for I will not lose the shadow of one of those unexpected chances which are sometimes reserved for us, for, after all, M. Franz may die before that time; a thunderbolt may fall even on the altar as you approach it; nothing appears impossible to one condemned to die, and miracles appear quite reasonable when his escape from death is concerned—I will then wait until the last moment, and when my misery is certain, irremediable, hopeless, I will write a confidential letter to my brother-in-law, another to the prefect of police, to acquaint them with my intention, and at the corner of some wood, on the brink of some abyss, on the bank of some river, I will put an end to my existence, as certainly as I am the son of the most honest man who ever lived in France."

Valentine trembled convulsively, she loosed her hold of the gate, her arms fell by her side, and two large

tears rolled down her cheeks. The young man stood before her, sorrowful and resolute.

"Oh! for pity's sake," said she, "you will live, will you not?"

"No! on my honor," said Maximilian; "but that will not affect you. You have done your duty, and your conscience will be at rest."

Valentine fell on her knees, and pressed her almost bursting heart.

"Maximilian!" said she, "Maximilian, my friend, my brother on earth, my true husband in heaven, I entreat you, do as I do, live in suffering; perhaps we may one day be united."

"Adieu, Valentine!" repeated Morrel.

"My God," said Valentine, raising both her hands to heaven with a sublime expression, "I have done my utmost to remain a submissive daughter; I have begged, entreated, implored; he has regarded neither my prayers, my entreaties, nor my tears. It is done," cried she, wiping away her tears, and resuming her firmness, "I am resolved not to die of remorse, but rather of shame. Live, Maximilian, and I will be yours. Say, when shall it be? Speak — command — I will obey."

Morrel, who had already gone some few steps away, returned, and, pale with joy, extended both hands towards Valentine, through the opening.

"Valentine," said he, "dear Valentine, you must not speak thus — rather let me die. Why should I obtain you by violence, if our love is mutual? Is it from mere humanity you bid me live? I would then rather die."

"Truly," murmured Valentine, "who on this earth cares for me, if he does not? Who has consoled me in my sorrow but he? On whom do my hopes rest? On whom does my bleeding heart repose? On him, on him, always on him! Yes, you are right; Maximilian, I will follow you, I will leave the paternal home, I will give up all. Oh! ungrateful girl that I am," cried Valentine, sobbing,

"I will give up all, even my dear old grandfather, whom I had nearly forgotten."

"No," said Maximilian, "you shall not leave him. M. Noirtier has evinced, you say, a kind feeling towards me. Well, before you leave, tell him all; his consent would be your justification in God's sight. As soon as we are married, he shall come and live with us; instead of one child, he shall have two. You have told me how you talk to him, and how he answers you; I shall very soon learn that language by signs, Valentine; and I promise you solemnly that, instead of despair, it is happiness that awaits us."

"Oh! see, Maximilian, see the power you have over me, you almost make me believe you; and yet, what you tell me is madness, for my father will curse me—he is inflexible—he will never pardon me. Now listen to me, Maximilian; if by artifice, by entreaty, by accident—in short, if by any means I can delay this marriage, will you wait?"

"Yes."

"I promise you, as faithfully as you have promised me, that this horrible marriage shall not take place, and that if I am dragged before a magistrate or a priest, I will refuse. I promise you by all that is most sacred to me in the world, namely, by my mother."

"We will wait, then," said Morrel.

"Yes, we will wait," replied Valentine, who revived at these words, "there are so many things which may save unhappy beings such as we are."

"I rely on you, Valentine," said Morrel; "all you do will be well done; only if they disregard your prayers, if your father and Madame de Saint-Meran insist that M. d'Epinay should be called to-morrow to sign the contract——"

"Then you have my promise, Morrel."

"Instead of signing——"

"I will rejoin you, and we will fly; but from this

moment until then, let us not tempt Providence, Morrel; let us not see each other; it is a miracle, it is a providence, that we have not been discovered; if we were surprised, if it were known that we met thus, we should have no further resource."

"You are right, Valentine; but how shall I ascertain?"

"From the notary, M. Deschamps."

"I know him."

"And for myself, I will write to you — depend on me. I dread this marriage, Maximilian, as much as you."

"Thank you, my adored Valentine, thank you! that is enough. When once I know the hour, I will hasten to this spot; you can easily get over this fence with my assistance, a carriage will await us at the gate, in which you will accompany me to my sister's; there living, retired or mingling in society as you wish, we shall be enabled to use our power to resist oppression, and not suffer ourselves to be put to death like sheep, which only defend themselves by sighs."

"Yes," said Valentine, "I will now acknowledge you are right, Maximilian; and now are you satisfied with your betrothal?" said the young girl, sorrowfully.

"My adored Valentine, words cannot express one half of my satisfaction."

Valentine had approached, or rather, had placed her lips so near the fence that they nearly touched those of Morrel, which were pressed against the other side of the cold and inexorable barrier.

"Adieu, then, till we meet again," said Valentine, tearing herself away.

"I shall hear from you?"

"Yes."

"Thanks, thanks, dear love. Adieu!"

The sound of a kiss was heard, and Valentine fled through the avenue. Morrel listened to catch the last sound of her dress brushing the branches and of her footsteps on the path, then raised his eyes with an ineffable

smile of thankfulness to heaven for being permitted to be thus loved, and then also disappeared. The young man returned home; he waited all the evening and all the next day without hearing anything. It was only on the following day, about ten o'clock in the morning, as he was starting to call on M. Deschamps, the notary, that he received from the postman a small billet, which he knew to be from Valentine, although he had not before seen her writing. It was to this effect:

"Tears, entreaties, prayers, have availed me nothing. Yesterday, for two hours, I was at the Church of Saint Philippe du Roule, and for two hours I prayed most fervently. Heaven is as inflexible as man, and the signature of the contract is fixed for this evening at nine o'clock. I have but one promise and one heart to give; that promise is pledged to you, that heart is also yours. This evening, then, at a quarter past nine, at the gate.

"Your betrothed,

"VALENTINE DE VILLEFORT.

"P. S. — My poor grandmother gets worse and worse; yesterday her fever amounted to delirium; to-day her delirium is almost madness. You will be very kind to me, will you not, Morrel, to make me forget my sorrow in leaving her thus? I think it is kept a secret from grand-papa Noirtier that the contract is to be signed this evening."

Morrel went also to the notary, who confirmed his account of the proposed signature. He then called on Monte-Cristo, and heard still more. Franz had been to announce the solemnity, and Madame de Villefort had also written to beg the count to excuse her not inviting him; the death of M. de Saint-Meran, and the dangerous illness of his widow, would cast a gloom over the meeting which she would regret the count should share, whom she wished

might enjoy every happiness. The day before Franz had been presented to Madame de Saint-Meran, who had left her bed to receive him, but had been obliged to return to it immediately after. It is easy to suppose that Morrel's agitation would not escape the count's penetrating eye. Monte-Cristo was more affectionate than ever — indeed, his manner was so kind, that several times Morrel was on the point of telling him all. But he recalled the promise he had made to Valentine's letter twenty times in the course of the day. It was her first, and on what an occasion! Each time he read it he renewed his vow to make her happy. How great is the authority of one who has made so courageous a resolution! What devotion does she deserve from him for whom she has sacrificed everything! How ought she really to be supremely loved! She becomes at once a queen and a wife, and it is impossible to thank and love her sufficiently. Morrel longed intensely for the moment when he should hear Valentine say, "Here I am, Maximilian; come and help me." He had arranged everything for her escape; two ladders were hidden in the clover-field; a cabriolet was ordered for Maximilian alone, without a servant, without lights; at the turning of the first street they would light the lamps, as it would be foolish to attract the notice of the police by too many precautions. Occasionally he shuddered; he thought of the moment when from the top of that wall he should protect the descent of his dear Valentine, pressing in his arms for the first time her of whom he had yet only kissed the delicate hand.

When the afternoon arrived, and he felt the hour was drawing near, he wished for solitude; his agitation was extreme; a simple question from a friend would have irritated him; he shut himself in his room and tried to read; but his eye glanced over the page without understanding a word, and he threw away the book, and for the second time sat down to sketch his plan, the ladders, and the fence. At length the hour drew near. Never did a

man deeply in love allow the clocks to go on peacefully. Morrel tormented his so effectually that they struck eight at half-past six. He then said, "It is time to start; the signature was indeed fixed to take place at nine o'clock; but perhaps Valentine would not wait for that;" consequently, Morrel having left the Rue Meslay at half-past eight by his timepiece, entered the clover-field while the clock of Saint Philippe du Roule was striking eight. The horse and cabriolet were concealed behind a small ruin, where Morrel had often waited. The night gradually drew on, and the foliage in the garden assumed a deeper hue. Then Morrel came out from his hiding-place with a beating heart, and looked through the small opening in the paling; there was yet no one to be seen. The clock struck half-past eight, and still another half-hour was passed in waiting, while Morrel looked to and fro, and gazed more and more frequently through the opening. The garden became darker still, but in the darkness he looked in vain for the white dress, and in silence he vainly listened for the sound of footsteps. The house, which was discernible through the trees, remained in darkness, and gave no indication that so important an event as the signature of a marriage-contract was going on. Morrel looked at his watch, which wanted a quarter to ten; but soon the same clock he had already heard strike two or three times, rectified the error by striking half-past nine. This was already half an hour past the time Valentine had fixed. It was a terrible moment for the young man. The slightest rustling of the foliage, the least whistling of the wind, attracted his attention, and drew the perspiration on his brow; then he tremblingly fixed his ladder, and, not to lose a moment, placed his foot on the first step. Amidst all these alternations of hope and fear the clock struck ten.

"It is impossible," said Maximilian, "that the signing of a contract should occupy so long a time without unexpected interruptions. I have weighed all the chances, calculated the time required for all the forms; something

must have happened." And then he walked rapidly to and fro, and pressed his burning forehead against the fence. Had Valentine fainted? or had she been discovered and stopped in her flight! These were the only preventatives which appeared possible to the young man.

The idea that her strength had failed her in attempting to escape, and that she had fainted in one of the paths, was the obstacle most impressed upon his mind. "In that case," said he, "I should lose her, and by my own fault." He dwelt on this thought one moment, then it appeared reality. He even thought he could perceive something on the ground at a distance; he ventured to call, and it seemed to him that the wind wafted back an almost inarticulate sigh. At last the half-hour struck. It was impossible to wait longer; his temples throbbed violently; his eyes were growing dim; he passed one leg over the wall, and in a moment leaped down on the other side. He was on Villefort's premises — had arrived there by scaling the wall. What might be the consequences? However, he had not ventured thus far to draw back. He followed a short distance close under the wall, then crossed a path, and entered a clump of trees. In a moment he had passed through them, and could see the house distinctly. Then Morrel was convinced of one thing: instead of lights at every window, as is customary on days of ceremony, he saw only a gray mass, which was veiled also by a cloud, which at that moment obscured the moon's feeble light. A light moved rapidly from time to time past three windows of the first floor. These three windows were in Madame de Saint-Meran's room. Another remained motionless behind some red curtains which were in Madame de Villefort's bedroom. Morrel guessed all this. So many times, in order to follow Valentine in thought at every hour in the day, had he made her describe all the house, that, without having seen it, he knew it all. This darkness and silence alarmed Morrel still more than Valentine's absence had done. Almost mad with grief, and determined to

venture everything in order to see Valentine once more and be certain of the misfortune he feared, Morrel gained the edge of the clump of trees, and was going to pass as quickly as possible through the flower-garden, when the sound of a voice, still at some distance, but which was borne upon the wind, reached him. At this sound, as he was already partially exposed to view, he stepped back and concealed himself completely, remaining perfectly motionless. He had formed his resolution. If it were Valentine alone, he would speak as she passed; if she were accompanied, and he could not speak, still he should see her, and know that she was safe. If they were strangers, he would listen to their conversation, and might understand something of this hitherto incomprehensible mystery. The moon had just then escaped from behind the cloud which had concealed it, and Morrel saw Villefort come out upon the steps, followed by a gentleman in black. They descended, and advanced towards the clump of trees, and Morrel soon recognized the other gentleman as Doctor d'Avrigny.

The young man, seeing them approach, drew back mechanically, until he found himself stopped by a sycamore-tree in the centre of the clump. There he was compelled to remain. Soon the two gentlemen stopped also.

"Ah, my dear doctor," said the procureur, "Heaven declares itself against my house! What a dreadful death! — what a blow! Seek not to console me. Alas! nothing can alleviate so great a sorrow — the wound is too deep and too fresh. She is dead! — she is dead!"

A cold dampness covered the young man's brow, and his teeth chattered. Who could be dead in that house which Villefort himself had called accursed?

"My dear M. de Villefort," replied the doctor, with a tone which redoubled the terror of the young man, "I have not led you here to console you; on the contrary ——"

"What can you mean?" asked the procureur, alarmed.

"I mean that behind this misfortune which has just happened to you there is another, perhaps still greater."

"Can it be possible?" murmured Villefort, clasping his hands; "what are you going to tell me?"

"Are we quite alone, my friend?"

"Yes, quite. But why all these precautions?"

"Because I have a terrible secret to communicate to you," said the doctor. "Let us sit down."

Villefort fell rather than seated himself. The doctor stood before him, with one hand placed on his shoulder. Morrel, horrified, supported his head with one hand, and with the other pressed his heart, lest its beatings should be heard.

"Dead! dead!" repeated he, within himself; and he felt as if he were also dying.

"Speak, doctor, I am listening," said Villefort; "strike—I am prepared for everything!"

"Madame de Saint-Meran was doubtless advancing in years, but she enjoyed excellent health."

Morrel began again to breathe freely, which he had not done the last ten minutes.

"Grief has consumed her," said Villefort,—"yes, grief, doctor! After living forty years with the marquis——"

"It is not grief, my dear Villefort," said the doctor. "Grief may kill, although it rarely does, and never in a day—never in an hour—never in ten minutes."

Villefort answered nothing; he simply raised his head, which had been cast down before, and looked at the doctor with amazement.

"Were you present during the last struggle?" asked M. d'Avrigny.

"I was," replied the procureur; "you begged me not to leave."

"Did you notice the symptoms of the disease to which Madame de Saint-Meran has fallen a victim?"

"I did. Madame de Saint-Meran had three successive attacks, at intervals of some minutes, each one more

serious than the former. When you arrived, Madame de Saint-Meran had already been panting for breath some minutes; she then had a fit, which I took to be simply a nervous attack, and it was only when I saw her raise herself in the bed, and her limbs and neck appear stiffened, that I became really alarmed. Then I understood from your countenance that there was more to fear than I had thought. This crisis past, I endeavored to catch your eye, but could not. You held her hand, you were feeling her pulse, and the second fit came on before you had turned towards me. This was more terrible than the first; the same nervous movements were repeated, and the mouth contracted and turned purple."

"And at the third she expired."

"At the end of the first attack I discovered symptoms of tetanus; you confirmed my opinion."

"Yes, before others," replied the doctor. "But now we are alone ——"

"What are you going to say? Oh, spare me!"

"That the symptoms of tetanus and poisoning by vegetable substances are the same."

M. de Villefort started from his seat, then in a moment fell down again, silent and motionless.

Morrel knew not if he were dreaming or awake.

"Listen," said the doctor. "I know the full importance of the statement I have just made, and the disposition of the man to whom I have made it."

"Do you speak to me as a magistrate or as a friend?" asked Villefort.

"As a friend, and only as a friend, at this moment. The similarity in the symptoms of tetanus and poisoning by vegetable substances is so great, that were I obliged to affirm by oath what I have now stated, I should hesitate; I therefore repeat to you, I speak not to a magistrate but to a friend. And to that friend I say, 'During the three-quarters of an hour that the struggle continued, I watched the convulsions and the death of Madame de Saint-Meran,

and am thoroughly convinced that not only did her death proceed from poison, but I could also specify the poison.'"

"Indeed, sir, — indeed!"

"The symptoms are marked, do you see — sleep disturbed by nervous fits, excitement of the brain, torpor of the system. Madame de Saint-Meran has sunk under a violent dose of brucine or of strychnine, which — by some mistake, perhaps — has been given to her."

Villefort seized the doctor's hand.

"Oh, it is impossible!" said he; "I must be dreaming! It is frightful to hear such things from such a man as you! Tell me, I entreat you, my dear doctor, that you may be deceived."

"Doubtless I may, but ——"

"But?"

"But I do not think so."

"Have pity on me, doctor! So many dreadful things have happened to me lately that I am on the verge of madness."

"Has any one besides me seen Madame de Saint-Meran?"

"No."

"Has anything been sent for from a chemist's that I have not examined?"

"Nothing."

"Has Madame de Saint-Meran any enemies?"

"Not to my knowledge."

"Would her death affect any one's interests?"

"It could not, indeed; my daughter is her only heiress — Valentine alone. Oh, if such a thought could present itself, I would stab myself to punish my heart for having for one instant harbored it."

"Indeed, my friend," said M. d'Avrigny, "I would not accuse any one; I speak only of an accident, you understand — of a mistake; but whether accident or mistake, the fact is there; it speaks to my conscience, and compels me to speak aloud to you. Make inquiry."

"Of whom? — how? — of what?"

"May not Barrois, the old servant, have made a mistake, and have given Madame de Saint-Meran a dose prepared for his master?"

"For my father?"

"Yes."

"But how could a dose prepared for M. Noirtier poison Madame de Saint-Meran?"

"Nothing is more simple. You know poisons become remedies in certain diseases, of which paralysis is one. For instance, having tried every other remedy to restore movement and speech to M. Noirtier, I resolved to try one last means, and for three months I have been giving him brucine; so that in the last dose I ordered for him there were six grains. This quantity, which it is perfectly safe to administer to the paralyzed frame of M. Noirtier, which has become gradually accustomed to it, would be sufficient to kill another person."

"My dear doctor, there is no communication between M. Noirtier's apartment and that of Madame de Saint-Meran, and Barrois never entered my mother-in-law's room. In short, doctor, although I know you to be the most conscientious man in the world, and although I place the utmost reliance in you, I want, notwithstanding my conviction, to believe this axiom, *errare humanum est!*"

"Is there any of my brethren in whom you have equal confidence with myself?"

"Why do you ask me that? — what do you wish?"

"Send for him; I will tell him what I have seen, and we will consult together, and examine the body."

"And you will find traces of poison?"

"No; I did not say of poison, but we can prove what was the state of the body; we shall discover the cause of her sudden death, and we shall say, 'Dear Villefort, if this thing has been caused by negligence, watch over your servants; if from hatred, watch your enemies.'"

"What do you propose to me, D'Avrigny?" said Ville-

fort, in despair; "so soon as another is admitted to our secret, an inquest will become necessary; and an inquest in my house, impossible! Still," continued the procureur, looking at the doctor with uneasiness, "if you wish it — if you demand it, it shall be done. But, doctor, you see me already so grieved — how can I introduce into my house so much scandal after so much sorrow? My wife and my daughter would die of it! And I, doctor — you know a man does not arrive at the post I occupy — one has not been procureur du roi twenty-five years without having amassed a tolerable number of enemies; mine are numerous. Let this affair be talked of, it will be a triumph for them which will make them rejoice, and cover me with shame. Pardon me, doctor, these worldly ideas; were you a priest, I should not dare tell you that; but you are a man, and you know mankind. Doctor, pray recall your words; you have said nothing, have you?"

"My dear M. Villefort," replied the doctor, "my first duty is humanity. I would have saved Madame de Saint-Meran if science could have done it; but she is dead — my duty concerns the living. Let us bury this terrible secret in the deepest recesses of our hearts; I am willing, if any one should suspect this, that my silence on this subject should be imputed to my ignorance. Meanwhile, sir, watch always — watch carefully, for, perhaps, the evil may not stop here. And when you have found the culprit, if you find him, I will say to you, 'You are a magistrate, do as you will!'"

"I thank you, doctor," said Villefort, with indescribable joy; "I never had a better friend than you." And as if he feared Doctor d'Avrigny would recall his promise, he hurried him towards the house.

When they were gone, Morrel ventured out from under the trees, and the moon shone upon his face, which was so pale that it might have been taken for a phantom.

"I am manifestly protected in a most wonderful, but

most terrible manner," said he; "but Valentine, poor girl! how will she bear so much sorrow?"

As he thought thus, he looked alternately at the window with red curtains and the three windows with white curtains. The light had almost disappeared from the former; doubtless Madame de Villefort had just put out her lamp, and the night-lamp alone reflected its dull light on the window.

At the extremity of the building, on the contrary, he saw one of the three windows open. A wax-light placed on the mantel-piece threw some of its pale rays without, and a shadow was seen for one moment on the balcony.

Morrel shuddered; he thought he heard a sob.

It cannot be wondered at that his mind, generally so courageous, but now disturbed by the two strongest human passions, love and fear, was weakened even to the indulgence of superstitious thoughts. Although it was impossible Valentine could see him, hidden as he was, he thought he heard the shadow at the window call him; his disturbed mind told him so. This double error became an irresistible reality, and by one of those incomprehensible transports of youth, he bounded from his hiding-place, and with two strides, at the risk of being seen, at the risk of alarming Valentine, at the risk of being discovered by some exclamation which might escape the young girl, he crossed the flower-garden, which, by the light of the moon, resembled a large white lake, and having passed the rows of orange-trees which extended in front of the house, he reached the step, ran quickly up, and pushed the door, which opened without offering any resistance. Valentine had not seen him; her eyes, raised towards heaven, were watching a silvery cloud gliding over the azure; its form was that of a shadow mounting towards heaven; her poetic and excited mind pictured it as the soul of her grandmother. Meanwhile, Morrel had traversed the anteroom and found the staircase, which, being carpeted, prevented his approach from being heard; and he had regained that degree of

confidence, that the presence of M. de Villefort even would not have alarmed him. Had he encountered him, his resolution was formed; he would have approached him and acknowledged all, begging him to excuse and sanction the love which united him to his daughter, and his daughter to him. Morrel was mad. Happily he did not meet any one. Now, especially, did he find the description Valentine had given of the interior of the house useful to him; he arrived safely at the top of the staircase, and while feeling his way, a sob indicated the direction he was to take; he turned back: a door partly open enabled him to see his road and to hear the sorrowing voice. He pushed it open and entered. At the other end of the room, under a white sheet which covered it, lay the corpse, still more alarming to Morrel since the account he had so unexpectedly overheard. By its side, on her knees, and her head buried in the cushion of the easy-chair, was Valentine, trembling and sobbing, her hands extended over her head, clasped and stiff. She had turned from the window, which remained open, and was praying in accents that would have affected the most unfeeling; her words were rapid, incoherent, unintelligible; for the burning weight of grief almost stopped her utterance. The moon, shining through the open blinds, made the lamp appear to burn paler, and cast a sepulchral hue over the whole scene. Morrel could not resist this; he was not exemplary for piety; he was not easily impressed, but Valentine suffering, weeping, wringing her hands before him, was more than he could bear in silence. He sighed and whispered a name, and the head bathed in tears and pressed on the velvet cushion of the chair — a head resembling a Magdalen by Correggio — was raised and turned towards him. Valentine perceived him without betraying the least surprise. A heart overwhelmed with one great grief is insensible to minor emotions. Morrel held out his hand to her. Valentine, as her only apology for not having met him, pointed to the corpse under the sheet, and began to sob again. Neither dared

for some time to speak in that room. They hesitated to break the silence which death seemed to impose; at length Valentine ventured.

"My friend," said she, "how came you here? Alas! I would say you are welcome, had not death opened the way for you into this house."

"Valentine," said Morrel, with a trembling voice, "I had waited since half-past eight, and did not see you come; I became uneasy, leaped the wall, found my way through the garden, when voices conversing about the fatal event ——"

"What voices?" asked Valentine.

Morrel shuddered as he thought of the conversation of the doctor and M. de Villefort, and he thought he could see through the sheet the extended hands, the stiff neck, and purple lips.

"Your servants," said he, "who were repeating the whole of the sorrowful story; from them I learned it all."

"But it was risking the failure of our plan to come up here, love."

"Forgive me," replied Morrel, "I will go away."

"No," said Valentine, "you might meet some one; stay."

"But if any one should come here ——"

The girl shook her head.

"No one will come," she said; "do not fear; there is our safeguard," pointing to the bed.

"What has become of M. d'Epinay?" replied Morrel.

"M. Franz arrived to sign the contract just as my dear grandmother was dying."

"Alas!" said Morrel, with a feeling of selfish joy; for he thought this death would cause the wedding to be postponed indefinitely.

"But what redoubles my sorrow," continued the young girl, as if this feeling was to receive its immediate punishment, "is that the poor old lady, on her death-bed,

requested the marriage might take place as soon as possible; she, also, thinking to protect me, was acting against me."

"Hark!" said Morrel.

They both listened; steps were distinctly heard in the corridor and on the stairs.

"It is my father, who has just left his cabinet."

"To accompany the doctor to the door," added Morrel.

"How do you know it is the doctor?" asked Valentine, astonished.

"I imagine it must be," said Morrel.

Valentine looked at the young man; they heard the street-door close; then M. de Villefort locked the garden-door, and returned upstairs. He stopped a moment in the anteroom, as if hesitating whether to turn to his own apartment or into Madame de Saint-Meran's. Morrel concealed himself behind a door; Valentine remained motionless: grief seemed to deprive her of all fear. M. de Villefort passed on to his own room.

"Now," said Valentine, "you can neither go out by the front door nor by the garden."

Morrel looked at her with astonishment.

"There is but one way left you that is safe," said she; "it is through my grandfather's room." She rose: "Come," she added.

"Where?" asked Maximilian.

"To my grandfather's room."

"To M. Noirtier's apartment?"

"Yes."

"Can you mean it, Valentine?"

"I have long wished it; he is my only remaining friend, and we both need his help—come."

"Be careful, Valentine," said Morrel, hesitating to comply with the young girl's wishes; "I now see my error—I acted as a madman in coming here. Are you sure you are more reasonable?"

"Yes," said Valentine; "and I have but one scruple,

namely, that of leaving my dear grandmother's remains, which I had undertaken to watch."

"Valentine," said Morrel, "death is in itself sacred."

"Yes," said Valentine; "besides, it will not be for long."

She then crossed the corridor, and led the way down a narrow staircase to M. Noirtier's room; Morrel followed her on tiptoe; at the door they found the old servant.

"Barrois," said Valentine, "shut the door, and let no one come in."

She passed first.

Noirtier, seated in his chair, and listening to every sound, was watching the door; he saw Valentine, and his eye brightened. There was something grave and solemn in the approach of the young girl, which struck the old man; and immediately his bright eye began to interrogate.

"Dear grandfather," said she, hurriedly, "you know poor grandmamma died an hour since, and now I have no friend in the world but you."

His expressive eyes evinced the greatest tenderness.

"To you alone, then, may I confide my sorrows and my hopes?"

The paralytic motioned, "Yes."

Valentine took Maximilian's hand.

"Look attentively, then, at this gentleman."

The old man fixed his scrutinizing gaze, with slight astonishment, on Morrel.

"It is M. Maximilian Morrel," said she; "the son of that good merchant of Marseilles whom you doubtless recollect."

"Yes," said the old man.

"He brings an irreproachable name, which Maximilian is likely to render glorious, since at thirty years of age he is a captain, an officer of the Legion of Honor."

The old man signified that he recollected him.

"Well, grandpapa," said Valentine, kneeling before him,

and pointing to Maximilian, "I love him, and will be only his; were I compelled to marry another, I would destroy myself."

The eyes of the paralytic expressed a multitude of tumultuous thoughts.

"You like M. Maximilian Morrel; do you not, grandpapa?" asked Valentine.

"Yes."

"And you will protect us, who are your children, against the will of my father?"

Noirtier cast an intelligent glance at Morrel, as if to say, "Perhaps I may."

Maximilian understood him.

"Mademoiselle," said he, "you have a sacred duty to fulfill in your deceased grandmother's room; will you allow me the honor of a few minutes' conversation with M. Noirtier?"

"That is it," said the old man's eye. Then he looked anxiously at Valentine.

"Do you fear he will not understand you?"

"Yes."

"Oh! we have so often spoken of you that he knows exactly how I talk to you."

Then turning to Maximilian, with an adorable smile, although shaded by sorrow:

"He knows everything I know," said she.

Valentine rose, replaced a chair for Morrel, requested Barrois not to admit any one, and having tenderly embraced her grandpapa, and sorrowfully taken leave of Morrel, she went away.

To prove to Noirtier that he was in Valentine's confidence and knew all their secrets, Morrel took the dictionary, a pen, and some paper, and placed them all on a table where there was a light.

"But first," said Morrel, "allow me, sir, to tell you who I am, how much I love Mademoiselle Valentine, and what are my designs respecting her."

Noirtier made a sign that he would listen.

It was an imposing sight to witness this old man, apparently a mere useless burden, becoming the sole protector, support, and adviser of the lovers, who were both young, beautiful, and strong. His remarkably noble and austere expression struck Morrel, who began his recital with trembling. He related the manner in which he had become acquainted with Valentine, and how he had loved her; and that Valentine, in her solitude and her misfortune, had accepted the offer of his devotion. He told him his birth, his position, his fortune; and more than once, when he consulted the look of the paralytic, that look answered, "That is good, proceed."

"And now," said Morrel, when he had finished the first part of his recital, "now I have told you of my love and my hopes, may I inform you of my intentions?"

"Yes," signified the old man.

"This was our resolution: a cabriolet was in waiting at the gate, in which I intended to carry off Valentine to my sister's house to marry her, and to wait respectfully M. de Villefort's pardon."

"No," said Noirtier.

"We must not do so?"

"No."

"You do not sanction our project?"

"No."

"There is another way," said Morrel.

The old man's interrogating eye said, "Which?"

"I will go," continued Maximilian, "I will seek M. Franz d'Epinay — I am happy to be able to mention this in Mademoiselle de Villefort's absence — and will conduct myself towards him so as to compel him to challenge me."

Noirtier's look continued to interrogate.

"You wish to know what I will do?"

"Yes."

"I will find him, as I told you, I will tell him the ties

which bind me to Mademoiselle Valentine; if he be a sensible man, he will prove it by renouncing of his own accord the hand of his betrothed, and will secure my friendship and love until death; if he refuse, either through interest or ridiculous pride, after I have proved to him that he would be forcing my wife from me, that Valentine loves me, and will love no other, I will fight with him, give him every advantage, and I shall kill him, or he will kill me; if I am victorious, he will not marry Valentine, and if I die, I am very sure Valentine will not marry him."

Noirtier watched with indescribable pleasure this noble and sincere countenance, on which every sentiment his tongue uttered was depicted, adding by the expression of his fine features all that coloring adds to a sound and faithful drawing. Still, when Morrel had finished, he shut his eyes several times, which was his manner of saying "No."

"No?" said Morrel; "you disapprove of this second project, as you did of the first?"

"I do," signified the old man.

"But what must then be done?" asked Morrel. "Madame de Saint-Meran's last request was that the marriage might not be delayed; must I let things take their course?"

Noirtier did not move.

"I understand," said Morrel; "I am to wait?"

"Yes."

"But delay may ruin our plan, sir," replied the young man. "Alone, Valentine has no power; she will be compelled to submit. I am here almost miraculously, and can scarcely hope for so good an opportunity to occur again. Believe me, there are only the two plans I have proposed to you; forgive my vanity, and tell me which you prefer. Do you authorize Mademoiselle Valentine to entrust herself to my honor?"

"No."

"Do you prefer I should seek M. d'Epinay?"

"No."

"Whence, then, will come the help we need; from chance?" resumed Morrel.

"No."

"From you?"

"Yes."

"You thoroughly understand me, sir? Pardon my eagerness, for my life depends on your answer. Will our help come from you?"

"Yes."

"You are sure of it?"

"Yes."

There was so much firmness in the look which gave this answer, no one could, at any rate, doubt his will, if they did his power.

"Oh, thank you a thousand times! But how, unless a miracle should restore your speech, your gesture, your movement, how can you, chained to that armchair, dumb and motionless, oppose this marriage?"

A smile lit up the old man's face—a strange smile of the eyes on a paralyzed face.

"Then I must wait?" asked the young man.

"Yes."

"But the contract?"

The same smile returned.

"Will you assure me it shall not be signed?"

"Yes," said Noirtier.

"The contract shall not be signed!" cried Morrel. "Oh! pardon me, sir; I can scarcely realize so great a happiness. Will they not sign it?"

"No," said the paralytic.

Notwithstanding that assurance, Morrel still hesitated. This promise of an impotent old man was so strange, that, instead of being the result of the power of his will, it might emanate from enfeebled organs. Is it not natural that the madman, ignorant of his folly, should realize

things beyond his control? The weak man talks of burdens he can raise, the timid of giants he can confront, the poor of treasures he spends, the most humble peasant, in the height of his pride, calls himself Jupiter.

Whether Noirtier understood the young man's indecision or whether he had not full confidence in his docility, he looked steadily at him.

"What do you wish, sir," asked Morrel; "that I should renew my promise of remaining tranquil?"

Noirtier's eyes remained fixed and firm, as if to imply that a promise did not suffice; then it passed from his face to his hands.

"Shall I swear to you, sir?" asked Maximilian.

"Yes," said the paralytic, with the same solemnity.

Morrel understood that the old man attached great importance to an oath. He extended his hand. "I swear to you, on my honor," said he, "to await your decision respecting the course I am to pursue with M. d'Epinay."

"That is right," said the old man.

"Now," said Morrel, "do you wish me to retire?"

"Yes."

"Without seeing Mademoiselle Valentine?"

"Yes."

Morrel made a sign that he was ready to obey.

"But," said he, "first allow me to embrace you as your daughter did just now."

Noirtier's expression could not be understood.

The young man pressed his lips on the same spot on the old man's forehead where Valentine's had been.

Then he bowed a second time and retired. He found the old servant outside the door, to whom Valentine had given directions; he conducted Morrel along a dark passage, which led to a little door opening on the garden.

Morrel soon found the spot where he had entered; with the assistance of the shrubs he gained the top of the wall, and by his ladder was in an instant in the clover-field,

where his cabriolet was still waiting for him. He got in it, and, thoroughly wearied by so many emotions, he arrived about midnight in the Rue Meslay, threw himself on his bed, and slept soundly.

CHAPTER LXXIV.

THE VILLEFORT FAMILY VAULT.

Two days after, a considerable crowd assembled, towards ten o'clock in the morning, around the door of M. de Villefort's house, and a long file of mourning-coaches and private carriages extended along the Faubourg Saint Honore and the Rue de la Pepinière. Among them was one of a singular form, which appeared to have come from a distance. It was a kind of covered wagon painted black, and was one of the first at the rendezvous. On inquiry, it was ascertained that, by a strange coincidence, this carriage contained the corpse of the Marquis de Saint-Meran, and that those who had come thinking to attend one funeral, would follow two.

Their number was great. The Marquis de Saint-Meran, one of the most zealous and faithful dignitaries of Louis XVIII. and King Charles X., had preserved a great number of friends, and these, added to the persons whom the usages of society gave Villefort a claim on, formed a considerable body.

Due information was given to the authorities, and permission obtained that the two funerals should take place at the same time. A second hearse, decked with the same funereal pomp, was brought to M. de Villefort's door, and the coffin removed into it from the post-wagon. The two bodies were to be interred in the cemetery of Père Lachaise, where M. de Villefort had long since had a tomb prepared for the reception of his family. The remains of poor Renee were already deposited there, whom, after ten years of separation, her father and mother were now going

to rejoin. The Parisians, always curious, always affected by funeral display, looked on with religious silence while the splendid procession accompanied to their last abode two of the number of the old aristocracy — the greatest protectors of commerce and sincere devotees to their principles.

In one of the mourning-coaches, Beauchamp, Debray, and Château-Renaud were talking of the very sudden death of the marchioness.

"I saw Madame de Saint-Meran only last year at Marseilles, and should have supposed she might have lived to be a hundred years old, from her apparent sound health and great activity of mind and body. How old was she?"

"Franz assured me," replied Albert, "that she was seventy years old. But she has not died of old age, but of grief; it appears that since the death of the marquis, which affected her very deeply, she has not completely recovered her reason."

"But of what disease did she die?" asked Debray.

"It is said to have been a congestion of the brain, or apoplexy, which is the same thing, is it not?"

"Nearly."

"It is difficult to believe it was apoplexy," said Beauchamp. "Madame de Saint-Meran, whom I once saw, was short, of slender form, and of a more nervous than sanguine temperament; grief could hardly produce apoplexy in such a constitution as that of Madame de Saint-Meran."

"At any rate," said Albert, "whatever disease or doctor may have killed her, M. de Villefort, or rather Mademoiselle Valentine, still rather, our friend Franz, inherits a magnificent fortune, amounting, I believe, to 80,000 livres per annum."

"And this fortune will be double at the death of the old Jacobin, Noirtier."

"That is a tenacious old grandfather," said Beauchamp. "*Tenacem propositi virum*. I think he must have made an agreement with Death to outlive all his heirs, and he

appears likely to succeed. He resembles the old Conventionalist of '93, who said to Napoleon in 1814, 'You bend because your empire is a young stem, weakened by rapid growth. Take the republic for a tutor; let us return with renewed strength to the battle-field, and I promise you 500,000 soldiers, another Marengo, and a second Austerlitz. Ideas do not become extinct, sire; they slumber sometimes, but only revive the stronger before they sleep entirely.' Ideas and men appear the same to him. One thing only puzzles me, namely, how Franz d'Epinay will have a grandfather who cannot be separated from his wife. But where is Franz?"

"In the first carriage, with M. de Villefort, who considers him already as one of the family."

Such was the conversation in almost all the carriages; these two sudden deaths, so quickly following each other, astonished every one; but no one suspected the terrible secret which M. d'Avrigny had communicated in his nocturnal walk to M. de Villefort.

They arrived in about an hour at the cemetery; the weather was mild, but dull, and in harmony with the funeral ceremony. Among the groups which flocked towards the family vault, Château-Renaud recognized Morrel, who had come alone in a cabriolet, and walked silently along the path bordered with yew-trees.

"You here!" said Château-Renaud, passing his arm through the young captain's; "are you a friend of Villefort's? How is it I have never met you at his house?"

"I am no acquaintance of M. de Villefort's," answered Morrel, "but I was of Madame de Saint-Meran."

Albert came up to them at this moment with Franz.

"The time and place are but ill suited for an introduction," said Albert; "but we are not superstitious. M. Morrel, allow me to present to you M. Franz d'Epinay, a delightful travelling companion, with whom I made the tour of Italy. My dear Franz, M. Maximilian Morrel, an excellent friend I have acquired in your absence, and

whose name you will hear me mention every time I make any allusion to affection, wit, or amiability."

Morrel hesitated for a moment; he feared it would be hypocritical to accost in a friendly manner the man whom he was tacitly opposing, but his oath and the gravity of the circumstances recurred to his memory; he struggled to conceal his emotion, and bowed to Franz.

"Mademoiselle de Villefort is in deep sorrow, is she not?" said Debray to Franz.

"Extremely," replied he; "she looked so pale this morning, I scarcely knew her."

These apparently simple words pierced Morrel to the heart. This man had then seen Valentine and spoken to her! The young and high-spirited officer required all his strength of mind to resist breaking his oath. He took the arm of Château-Renaud, and turned towards the vault, where the attendants had already placed the two coffins.

"This is a magnificent habitation," said Beauchamp, looking towards the mausoleum — "a summer and winter palace. You will in turn enter it, my dear D'Epinay, for you will soon be numbered as one of the family. I, as a philosopher, should like a little country-house, a cottage down there under the trees, without so many freestones over my poor body. In dying, I will say to those around me what Voltaire wrote to Piron, '*Eo rus*,' and all will be over. But come, Franz, take courage, your wife is an heiress."

"Indeed, Beauchamp, you are unbearable. Politics have made you laugh at everything, and political men have made you disbelieve everything. But when you have the honor of associating with ordinary men, and the pleasure of leaving politics for a moment, try to find your affectionate heart, which you leave with your stick when you go to the Chamber."

"But tell me," said Beauchamp, "what is life? Is it not a hall in Death's anteroom?"

"I am prejudiced against Beauchamp," said Albert,

drawing Franz away, and leaving the former to finish his philosophical dissertation with Debray.

The Villefort vault formed a square of white stones, about twenty feet high; an interior partition separated the two families, and each compartment had its entrance-door. Here were not, as in other tombs, those ignoble drawers one above another, where economy encloses its dead with an inscription resembling a ticket; all that was visible within the bronze gates was a gloomy-looking room, separated by a wall from the vault itself. The two doors, before mentioned, were in the middle of this wall, and enclosed the Villefort and Saint-Meran coffins. There grief might freely expend itself without being disturbed by the trifling loungers who came from a picnic party to visit Père Lachaise, or by lovers who made it their rendezvous.

The two coffins were placed on trestles previously prepared for their reception in the right-hand division, belonging to the Saint-Meran family. Villefort, Franz, and a few near relatives alone entered the sanctuary.

As the religious ceremonies had been performed at the door, and there was no address given, the party all separated; Château-Renaud, Albert, and Morrel went one way, and Debray and Beauchamp the other. Franz remained with M. de Villefort; at the gate of the cemetery Morrel made an excuse to wait; he saw Franz and M. de Villefort get into the same mourning-coach, and thought this *tête-à-tête* foreboded evil. He then returned to Paris, and although in the same carriage with Château-Renaud and Albert, he did not hear one word of their conversation. As Franz was about to take leave of M. Villefort, "When shall I see you again?" said the latter.

"At what time you please, sir," replied Franz.

"As soon as possible."

"I am at your command, sir; shall we return together?"

"If not unpleasant to you."

"On the contrary, I shall feel much pleasure."

Thus, the future father and son-in-law stepped into the same carriage, and Morrel, seeing them pass, became uneasy.

Villefort and Franz returned to the Faubourg St. Honore. The procureur, without going to see either his wife or his daughter, passed rapidly to his cabinet, and, offering the young man a chair:

"M. d'Epinay," said he, "allow me to remind you at this moment, which is, perhaps, not so ill chosen as at first sight may appear, for obedience to the wishes of the departed is the first offering which should be made at their tomb—allow me, then, to remind you of the wish expressed by Madame de Saint-Meran on her death-bed, that Valentine's wedding might not be deferred. You know the affairs of the deceased are in perfect order, and her will bequeaths to Valentine the entire property of the Saint-Meran family; the notary showed me the documents yesterday, which will enable us to draw up the contract immediately. You may call on the notary, M. Deschamps, Place Beauvau, Faubourg Saint Honore, and you have my authority to inspect those deeds."

"Sir," replied M. d'Epinay, "it is not, perhaps, the moment for Mademoiselle Valentine, who is in deep distress, to think of a husband; indeed, I fear —"

"Valentine will have no greater pleasure than that of fulfilling her grandmamma's last injunctions; there will be no obstacle from that quarter, I assure you."

"In that case," replied Franz, "as I shall raise none, you may make arrangements when you please; I have pledged my word, and shall feel pleasure and happiness in adhering to it."

"Then," said Villefort, "nothing further is required; the contract was to have been signed three days since; we shall find it all ready, and can sign it to-day."

"But the mourning?" said Franz, hesitating.

"Fear not," replied Villefort; "no ceremony will be neglected in my house. Mademoiselle de Villefort may

retire during the prescribed three months to her estate of Saint-Meran; I say hers, for she inherits it to-day. There, after a few days, if you like, the civil marriage shall be celebrated without pomp or ceremony. Madame de Saint-Meran wished her daughter should be married there. When that is over, you can return to Paris, while your wife passes the time of her mourning with her step-mother."

"As you please, sir," said Franz.

"Then," replied M. de Villefort, "have the kindness to wait half an hour; Valentine shall come down into the drawing-room. I will send for M. Deschamps; we will read and sign the contract before we separate, and this evening Madame de Villefort shall accompany Valentine to her estate, where we will rejoin them in a week."

"Sir," said Franz, "I have one request to make."

"What is it?"

"I wish Albert de Morcerf and Raoul de Château-Renaud to be present at this signature; you know they are my witnesses."

"Half an hour will suffice to apprise them; will you go for them yourself, or will you send?"

"I prefer going, sir."

"I shall expect you, then, in half an hour, baron; and Valentine will be ready."

Franz bowed and left the room. Scarcely had the door closed, when M. de Villefort sent to tell Valentine to be ready in the drawing-room in half an hour, as he expected the notary and M. d'Epinay and his witnesses.

The news caused a great sensation throughout the house; Madame de Villefort would not believe it, and Valentine was thunderstruck. She looked around for help, and would have gone down to her grandfather's room, but meeting M. de Villefort on the stairs, he took her arm and led her into the drawing-room.

In the anteroom, Valentine met Barrois, and looked despairingly at the old servant. One moment after, Ma-

dame de Villefort entered the drawing-room with her little Edward. It was evident that she had shared the grief of the family, for she was pale and looked fatigued. She sat down, took Edward on her knees, and from time to time pressed, almost convulsively, to her bosom this child on whom her affections appeared centred. Two carriages were soon heard to enter the courtyard. One was the notary's, the other that of Franz and his friends. In a moment the whole party was assembled. Valentine was so pale, one might trace the blue veins from her temples, around her eyes and down her cheeks. Franz was deeply affected. Château-Renaud and Albert looked at each other with amazement; the ceremony which was just concluded had not appeared more sorrowful than that which was commencing. Madame de Villefort had placed herself in the shade behind a velvet curtain, and as she constantly bent over her child, it was difficult to read the expression of her face. M. de Villefort was, as usual, unmoved.

The notary, after having, according to the customary method, arranged the papers on the table, taken his place in an armchair, and raised his spectacles, turned towards Franz:

"Are you M. Franz de Quesnel, Baron d'Epinay?" asked he, although he knew it perfectly.

"Yes, sir," replied Franz.

The notary bowed.

"I have, then, to inform you, sir, at the request of M. de Villefort, that your projected marriage with Mademoiselle de Villefort has changed the feeling of M. Noirtier towards his grandchild; and that he disinherits her entirely of the fortune he would have left her. Let me hasten to add," continued he, "that the testator, having only a right to alienate a part of his fortune, and having alienated it all, the will cannot bear scrutiny, and is declared null and void."

"Yes," said Villefort; "but I warn M. d'Epinay that, during my lifetime, my father's will shall never be scru-

tinized, my position forbidding any doubt to be entertained."

"Sir," said Franz, "I regret that such a question has been raised in the presence of Mademoiselle Valentine; I have never inquired the amount of her fortune, which, however limited it may be, exceeds mine. My family has sought consideration in this alliance with M. de Villefort; all I seek is happiness."

Valentine imperceptibly thanked him, while two silent tears rolled down her cheeks.

"Besides, sir," said Villefort, addressing himself to his future son-in-law, "excepting the loss of a portion of your hopes, this unexpected will need not personally wound you; M. Noirtier's weakness of mind sufficiently explains it. It is not because Mademoiselle Valentine is going to marry you that he is angry, but because she will marry; a union with any other would have caused him the same sorrow. Old age is selfish, sir, and Mademoiselle de Villefort has been a faithful companion to M. Noirtier, which she cannot be when Madame la Baronne d'Epinay. My father's melancholy state prevents our speaking to him on many subjects, which the weakness of his mind would incapacitate him from understanding, and I am perfectly convinced that at the present time, although he knows his granddaughter is going to be married, M. Noirtier has even forgotten the name of his intended grandson."

M. de Villefort had scarcely said this, when the door opened, and Barrois appeared.

"Gentlemen," said he, in a tone strangely firm for a servant speaking to his masters under such solemn circumstances, "Gentlemen, M. Noirtier de Villefort wishes to speak immediately to M. Franz de Quesnel, Baron d'Epinay;" he, as well as the notary, that there might be no mistake in the person, gave all his titles to the bridegroom-elect.

Villefort started, Madame de Villefort let her son slip from her knees, Valentine rose pale and dumb as a statue.

Albert and Château-Renaud exchanged a second look, more full of amazement than the first. The notary looked at Villefort.

"It is impossible," said the procureur du roi; "M. d'Epinaï cannot leave the drawing-room at present."

"It is at this moment," replied Barrois, with the same firmness, "that M. Noirtier, my master, wishes to speak on important subjects to M. Franz d'Epinaï."

"Grandpapa Noirtier can speak now, then," said Edward, with his habitual quickness. However, his remark did not make Madame de Villefort even smile, so much was every mind engaged, and so solemn was the situation.

Astonishment was at its height. A kind of smile was perceptible on Madame de Villefort's countenance. Valentine instinctively raised her eyes, as if to thank Heaven.

"Pray go, Valentine," said M. de Villefort, "and see what this new fancy of your grandfather's is."

Valentine rose quickly, and was hastening joyfully towards the door, when M. de Villefort altered his intention.

"Stop!" said he; "I will go with you."

"Excuse me, sir," said Franz, "since M. Noirtier sent for me, I am ready to attend to his wish; besides, I shall be happy to pay my respects to him, not having yet had the honor of doing so."

"Pray, sir," said Villefort, with uneasiness, "do not disturb yourself."

"Forgive me, sir," said Franz, in a resolute tone. "I would not lose this opportunity of proving to M. Noirtier how wrong it would be of him to encourage feelings of dislike to me, which I am determined to conquer, whatever they may be, by my devotedness." And without listening to Villefort, he rose, and followed Valentine, who was running downstairs with the joy of a shipwrecked mariner who finds some rock to cling to.

M. de Villefort followed them. Château-Renaud and Morcerf exchanged a third look of still increasing wonder.

CHAPTER LXXV.

PROCÈS - VERBAL.

NOIRTIER was prepared to receive them, dressed in black, and installed in his armchair. When the three persons he expected had entered, he looked at the door, which his valet immediately closed.

"Listen," whispered Villefort to Valentine, who could not conceal her joy; "if M. Noirtier wishes to communicate anything which would delay your marriage, I forbid you to understand him."

Valentine blushed, but did not answer. Villefort, approaching Noirtier:

"Here is M. Franz d'Epinaï," said he; "you requested to see him. We have all wished for this interview, and I trust it will convince you how ill-formed are your objections to Valentine's marriage."

Noirtier answered only by a look which made Villefort's blood run cold. He motioned to Valentine to approach. In a moment, thanks to her habit of conversing with her grandfather, she understood he asked for a key. Then his eye was fixed on the drawer of a small chest between the windows. She opened the drawer and found a key; and, understanding that was what he wanted, again watched his eyes, which turned towards an old secrétaire, long since forgotten, and supposed to contain none but useless documents.

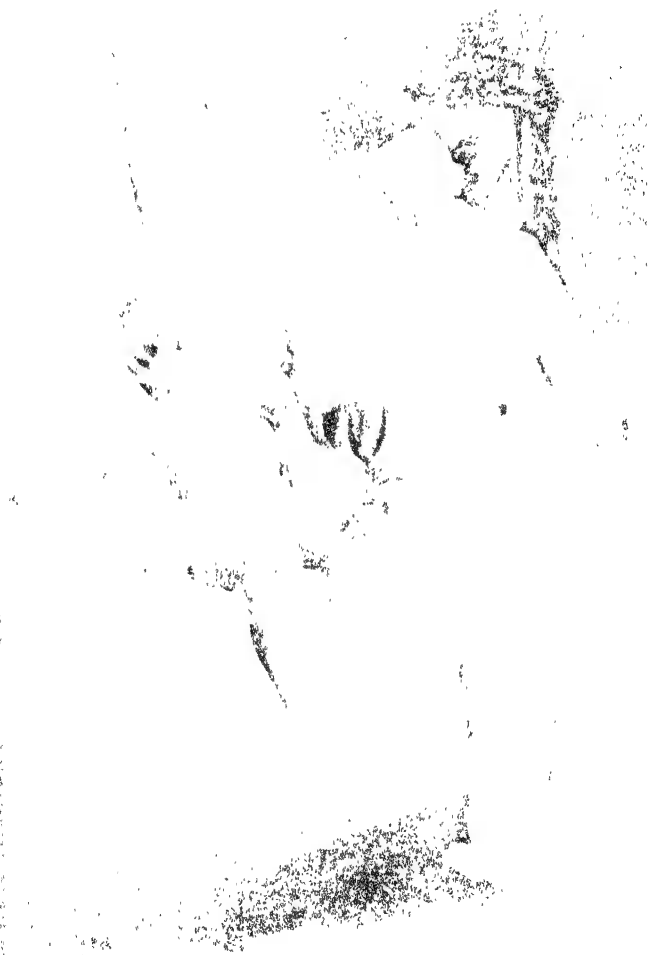
"Shal' I open the secrétaire?" asked Valentine.

"Yes," said the old man.

"And the drawers?"

"Yes."

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"Those at the side?"

"No."

"The middle one?"

"Yes."

Valentine opened it, and drew out a bundle of papers.

"Is that what you wish for?" asked she.

"No."

She took out successively all the other papers till the drawer was empty.

"But there are no more," said she.

Noirtier's eyes was fixed on the dictionary.

"Yes, I understand, grandfather," said the young girl.

She pointed to each letter of the alphabet.

At the letter S the old man stopped her. She opened and found the word "secret."

"Ah! is there a secret spring?" said Valentine.

"Yes," said Noirtier.

"And who knows it?"

Noirtier looked at the door where the servant had gone out.

"Barrois?" said she.

"Yes."

"Shall I call him?"

"Yes."

Valentine went to the door, and called Barrois. Villefort's impatience during this scene made the perspiration roll from his forehead, and Franz was stupefied. The old servant came.

"Barrois," said Valentine, "my grandfather has told me to open that drawer in the secrétaire, but there is a secret spring in it, which you know — will you open it?"

Barrois looked at the old man. "Obey," said Noirtier's intelligent eye. Barrois looked, touched a spring, the false bottom came out, and they saw a bundle of papers tied with a black string. "Is that what you wish for?" said Barrois.

"Yes."

"Shall I give these papers to M. de Villefort?"

"No."

"To Mademoiselle Valentine?"

"No."

"To M. Franz d'Epinaï?"

"Yes."

Franz, astonished, advanced a step.

"To me, sir?" said he.

"Yes."

Franz took them from Barrois, and, casting his eye on the cover, read:

"To be given, after my death, to General Durand, who shall bequeath the packet to his son, with an injunction to preserve it, as containing an important document."

"Well, sir," asked Franz, "what do you wish me to do with this paper?"

"To preserve it, sealed up as it is, doubtless," said the procureur du roi.

"No, no," replied Noirtier, eagerly.

"Do you wish him to read it?" said Valentine.

"Yes," replied the old man.

"You understand, baron, my grandfather wishes you to read this paper," said Valentine.

"Then let us sit down," said Villefort, impatiently, "for it will take some time."

"Sit down," said the old man.

Villefort took a chair, but Valentine remained standing by her father's side, and Franz before him, holding the mysterious paper in his hand.

"Read," said the old man.

Franz untied it, and in the midst of the most profound silence, read:

"Extract of the Procès-verbal of a meeting of the Bonapartist Club in the Rue Saint-Jacques, held February 5, 1815."

Franz stopped.

"February 5, 1815!" said he; "it is the day my father was murdered."

Valentine and Villefort were dumb; the eye of the old man alone seemed to say clearly, "Go on."

"But it was on leaving this club," said he, "my father disappeared."

Noirtier's eye continued to say, "Read."

He resumed:

"The undersigned, Louis Jacques Beaurepaire, lieutenant colonel of artillery, Etienne Duchampy, general of brigade, and Claude Lecharpal, keeper of woods and forests,

"Declare that, on the 4th of February, a letter arrived from the Isle of Elba, recommending to the kindness and the confidence of the Bonapartist Club, General Flavien de Quesnel, who, having served the emperor from 1804 to 1814, was supposed to be devoted to the interest of the Napoleon dynasty, notwithstanding the title of baron, which Louis XVIII. had just granted to him with his estate of Epinay.

"A note was, in consequence, addressed to the General de Quesnel, begging him to be present at the meeting next day, the 5th. The note indicated neither the street nor the number of the house where the meeting was to be held; it bore no signature, but it announced to the general that some one would call for him if he would be ready at nine o'clock.

"The meetings were always held from that time till midnight.

"At nine o'clock the president of the club presented himself; the general was ready. The president informed him one of the conditions of his introduction was that he should be entirely ignorant of the place of meeting, and that he would allow his eyes to be bandaged, swearing that he would not endeavor to take off the bandage.

"The General de Quesnel accepted the condition, and promised, on his honor, not to seek to discover the road they took. The general's carriage was ready, but the president told him it was impossible he could use it, for it was useless to blindfold the master if the coachman knew through what streets he went.

"What must then be done?" asked the general.

"I have my carriage here," said the president.

"Have you, then, so much confidence in your servant that you can entrust him with a secret you will not allow me to know?"

"Our coachman is a member of the club," said the president; "we shall be driven by a state-councillor."

"Then we run another risk," said the general, laughing, "that of being upset."

"We insert this joke to prove that the general was not in the least compelled to attend this meeting, but that he came willingly.

"When they were seated in the carriage, the president reminded the general of his promise to allow his eyes to be bandaged, to which he made no opposition. On the road the president thought he saw the general make an attempt to remove the handkerchief, and reminded him of his oath.

"True," said the general.

"The carriage stopped at a passage leading to the Rue Saint-Jacques. The general alighted, leaning on the arm of the president, of whose dignity he was not aware, considering him simply as a member of the club; they crossed the passage, mounted to the first story, and entered the meeting-room. The deliberations had already commenced. The members, apprised of the sort of presentation which was to be made that evening, were all in attendance. When in the middle of the room, the general was invited to remove his bandage. He did so immediately, and was surprised to see so many well-known faces in a society of whose existence he had till then been ignorant. They

questioned him as to his sentiments, but he contented himself with answering that the letter from the Isle of Elba ought to have informed them ——”

Franz interrupted himself by saying :

“My father was a royalist; they need not have asked his sentiments, which were well known.”

“And hence,” said Villefort, “arose my affection for your father, my dear M. Franz. A similarity of opinion soon binds.”

“Read again,” said the old man. Franz continued :

“The president then sought to make him speak more explicitly; but M. de Quesnel replied that he wished first to know what they wanted with him.

“He was then informed of the contents of the letter from the Isle of Elba, in which he was recommended to the club as a man who would be likely to advance the interests of their party.

“One paragraph alluded to the return of Bonaparte, and promised another letter and further details on the arrival of the Pharaoh, belonging to the shipbuilder Morrel, of Marseilles, whose captain was entirely devoted to the emperor.

“During all this time, the general, on whom they thought to have relied as on a brother, manifested evident signs of discontent and repugnance.

“When the reading was finished, he remained silent, with knit brow.

“‘Well,’ asked the president, ‘what do you say to this letter, general?’

“‘I say that it is too soon after declaring myself for Louis XVIII. to break my vow in behalf of the ex-emperor.’

“This answer was too clear to allow of a mistake as to his sentiments.

“‘General,’ said the president, ‘we acknowledge no King Louis XVIII., nor an ex-emperor, but his majesty

the emperor and king, driven from France, which is his kingdom, by violence and treason.'

"'Excuse me, gentlemen,' said the general; 'you may not acknowledge Louis XVIII., but I do, as he has made me a baron and a field-marshal, and I shall never forget that for these two titles I am indebted to his happy return to France.'

"'Sir,' said the president, rising with gravity, 'be careful what you say; your words clearly show us that they are deceived concerning you in the Isle of Elba, and have deceived us! The communication has been made to you in consequence of the confidence placed in you, and which does you honor. Now we discover our error; a title and promotion attach you to the government we wish to overturn. We will not constrain you to help us; we enroll no one against his conscience, but we will compel you to act generously, even if you were not disposed to do so.'

"'You would call acting generously, knowing your conspiracy and not informing against you; that is what I should call becoming your accomplice. You see I am more candid than you.'"

"Ah, my father!" said Franz, interrupting himself, "I understand now why they murdered him."

Valentine could not help casting one glance towards the young man, whose filial enthusiasm it was delightful to behold. Villefort walked to and fro behind them. Noirtier watched the expression of each one, and preserved his dignified and commanding attitude.

Franz returned to the manuscript, and continued:

"'Sir,' said the president, 'you have been invited to join this assembly. You were not forced here; it was proposed to you to come blindfolded; you accepted. When you complied with this twofold request you well know we did not wish to secure the throne to Louis XVIII., or we

should not take so much care to avoid the vigilance of the police. It would be conceding too much to allow you to put on a mask to aid you in the discovery of our secret, and then to remove it that you may ruin those who have confided in you. No, no; you must first say if you declare yourself for the king of a day who now reigns, or for his majesty the emperor.'

"'I am a royalist,' replied the general; 'I have taken the oath of allegiance to Louis XVIII., and I will adhere to it.'

"These words were followed by a general murmur, and it was evident that several of the members were discussing the propriety of making the general repent of his rashness.

"The president again rose, and having imposed silence, said :

"'Sir, you are too serious and too sensible a man not to understand the consequences of our present situation, and your candor has already dictated to us the conditions which remain for us to offer you.'

"The general, putting his hand on his sword, exclaimed :

"'If you talk of honor, do not begin by disavowing its laws, and impose nothing by violence.'

"'And you, sir,' continued the president, with a calmness still more terrible than the general's anger, 'do not touch your sword, I advise you.'

"The general looked around with slight uneasiness; however, he did not yield, but recalling all his strength :

"'I will not swear,' said he.

"'Then you must die,' replied the president, calmly.

"M. d'Epinay became very pale; he looked around him a second time; several members of the club were whispering, and getting their arms from under their cloaks.

"'General,' said the president, 'do not alarm yourself; you are among men of honor, who will use every means to convince you before resorting to the last extremity; but as you have said, you are among conspirators, you are in the possession of our secret, and you must restore it to us.'

"A significant silence followed these words, and as the general did not reply :

" 'Close the doors,' said the president to the doorkeepers.

"The same deadly silence succeeded these words. Then the general advanced, and making a violent effort to control his feelings :

" 'I have a son,' said he, 'and I ought to think of him, finding myself among assassins.'

" 'General,' said the chief of the assembly, 'one man may insult fifty—it is the privilege of weakness. But he does wrong to use his privilege. Follow my advice: swear, but do not insult.'

"The general, again daunted by the authority of the chief, hesitated a moment; then advancing to the president's desk :

" 'What is the form ? ' said he.

" 'It is this: "I swear by my honor not to reveal to any one what I saw and heard on the 5th of February, 1815, between nine and ten o'clock in the evening, and I plead guilty of death should I ever violate this oath."'

"The general appeared to be affected by a nervous shudder, which prevented his answering for some moments, then, overcoming his manifest repugnance, he pronounced the required oath, but in so low a tone as to be scarcely audible to the majority of the members, who insisted on his repeating it clearly and distinctly, which he did.'

" 'Now am I at liberty to retire ? ' asked the general.

"The president rose, appointed three members to accompany him, and got into the carriage with the general, after bandaging his eyes.

"One of those three members was the coachman who had driven him there. The other members silently dispersed.

" 'Where do you wish to be taken ? ' asked the president.

" 'Anywhere out of your presence,' replied M. d'Épinay.

" 'Beware, sir,' replied the president; 'you are no longer in the assembly, and have only to deal with individuals;

do not insult them, unless you wish to be held responsible.'

"But instead of listening, M. d'Epinay went on:

"'You are still as brave in your carriage as in your assembly, because you are still four against one.'

"The president stopped the coach.

"They were at that part of the Quai des Ormes where the steps lead down to the river.

"'Why do you stop here?' asked D'Epinay.

"'Because, sir,' said the president, 'you have insulted a man, and that man will not go one step further without demanding honorable reparation.'

"'Another method of assassination!' said the general, shrugging his shoulders.

"'Make no noise, sir, unless you wish me to consider you as one of those men whom you designated just now as cowards, who take their weakness for a shield. You are alone — one alone shall answer you; you have a sword by your side — I have one in my cane; you have no witness — one of these gentlemen will serve you. Now, if you please, remove your bandage.'

"The general tore the handkerchief from his eyes.

"'At last,' said he, 'I shall know with whom I have to do.'

"They opened the door; the four men alighted."

Franz again interrupted himself, and wiped the cold drops from his brow; there was something awful in hearing the son, trembling and pale, read aloud these details of his father's death, which had hitherto remained unknown.

Valentine clasped her hands as if in prayer. Noirtier looked at Villefort with an almost sublime expression of contempt and pride.

Franz continued:

"It was, as we said, the 5th of February. For three days there had been five or six degrees of frost; the steps

were covered with ice. The general was stout and tall; the president offered him the side of the railing to assist him in getting down. The two witnesses followed.

"It was a dark night. The ground from the steps to the river was covered with snow and hoar-frost, the water of the river looked black and deep. One of the seconds went for a lantern in a coal-barge, and by its light they examined the arms.

"The president's sword, which was simply, as he had said, one he carried in his cane, was five inches shorter than the general's, and had no guard; the general proposed to cast lots for the swords, but the president said it was he who had given the provocation, and when he had given it, had supposed each would use his own arms. The witnesses endeavored to insist, but the president bade them be silent.

"The lantern was placed on the ground, the two adversaries arranged themselves, and the duel commenced.

"The light made the two swords appear like flashes of lightning; as for the men they were scarcely perceptible, the darkness was so great.

"M. le General d'Epinay passed for one of the best swordsmen in the army, but he was pressed so closely in the onset, that he missed his aim and fell. The witnesses thought he was dead, but his adversary, who knew he had not struck him, offered him the assistance of his hand to rise. This circumstance irritated instead of calming the general, and he rushed on his adversary. But his opponent did not miss one stroke. Receiving him on his sword, three times the general drew back, and finding himself foiled, returned to the charge. At the third he fell again. They thought he slipped, as at first, and the witnesses, seeing he did not move, approached and endeavored to raise him, but the one who passed his arm around the body found it was moistened with blood. The general, who had almost fainted, revived.

"*'Ah!'* said he, *'they have sent some fencing-master to fight with me.'*

"The president, without answering, approached the witness who held the lantern, and raising his sleeve, showed him two wounds he had received in his arm; then, opening his coat, and unbuttoning his waistcoat, displayed his side, pierced with a third wound. Still he had not uttered a sigh.

"General d'Epinay died five minutes after."

Franz read these last words in a voice so choked that they were hardly audible, and then stopped, passing his hand over his eyes as if to dispel a cloud. But, after a moment's silence, he continued:

"The president went up the steps, after pushing his sword into his cane; a track of blood on the snow marked his course. He had scarcely arrived at the top when he heard a heavy splash in the water—it was the general's body, which the witnesses had just thrown into the river after ascertaining he was dead. The general fell, then, in a loyal duel, and not in ambush, as might have been reported.

"In proof of this we have signed this paper to establish the truth of the facts, lest the moment should arrive when either of the actors in this terrible scene should be accused of premeditated murder or of infringement of the laws of honor.

"BEAUREPAIRE, DUCHAMPY, and LECHARPAL."

When Franz had finished reading this account, so dreadful for a son—when Valentine, pale with emotion, had wiped away a tear—when Villefort, trembling and crouched in a corner, had endeavored to lessen the storm by supplicating glances at the implacable old man:

"Sir," said D'Epinay to Noirtier, "since you are well acquainted with all these details, which are attested by honorable signatures—since you appear to take some interest in me, although you have only manifested it

hitherto by causing me sorrow, refuse me not one final satisfaction — tell me the name of the president of the club, that I may at least know who killed my father."

Villefort mechanically felt for the handle of the door. Valentine, who understood sooner than any one her grandfather's answer, and who had often seen two scars upon his right arm, drew back a few steps.

"Mademoiselle," said Franz, turning towards Valentine, "unite your efforts with mine to find out the name of the man who made me an orphan at two years of age."

Valentine remained dumb and motionless.

"Hold, sir!" said Villefort; "do not prolong this dreadful scene. The names have been purposely concealed; my father himself does not know who this president was, and if he knows, he cannot tell you: proper names are not in the dictionary."

"Oh, misery!" cried Franz; "the only hope which sustained me and enabled me to read to the end was that of knowing, at least, the name of him who killed my father! Sir! sir!" cried he, turning to Noirtier, "do what you can! make me understand in some way!"

"Yes," replied Noirtier.

"Oh, mademoiselle! mademoiselle!" cried Franz, "your grandfather says he can indicate the person. Help me! lend me your assistance!"

Noirtier looked at the dictionary. Franz took it, with a nervous trembling, and repeated the letters of the alphabet successively, until he came to M.

At that letter the old man signified "Yes."

"M?" repeated Franz.

The young man's finger glided over the words, but at each one Noirtier answered by a negative sign.

Valentine hid her head between her hands.

At length Franz arrived at the word **MYSELF**.

"Yes!"

"You!" cried Franz, whose hair stood on end; "you, M. Noirtier! you killed my father?"

"Yes!" replied Noirtier, fixing a majestic look on the young man.

Franz fell powerless on a chair; Villefort opened the door and escaped, for the idea had entered his mind to stifle the little remaining life in the old man's heart.

CHAPTER LXXVI

PROGRESS OF M. CAVALCANTI THE YOUNGER.

MEANWHILE M. Cavalcanti the elder had returned to his service, not in the army of his Majesty, the Emperor of Austria, but at the gaming-table of the baths of Lucca, of which he was one of the most assiduous courtiers.

He had spent every farthing that had been allowed for his journey as a reward for the majestic and solemn manner in which he had maintained his assumed character of father. M. Andrea at his departure inherited all the papers, which proved that he had indeed the honor of being the son of the Marquis Bartolomeo and the Marchioness Oliva Corsinari.

He was now fairly launched in that Parisian society which gives such ready access to foreigners, and treats them, not as what they really are, but as what they wish to be considered.

Besides, what is required of a young man in Paris? To speak its language tolerably, to make a good appearance, to be a good gamester, and to pay in cash. They are certainly less particular with a foreigner than with a Frenchman.

Andrea had, then, in a fortnight, attained a very fair position. He was entitled M. le comte, he was said to possess 50,000 livres per annum; and his father's immense riches, buried in the quarries of Saravezza, were a constant theme.

A learned man before whom the last circumstance was mentioned as a fact, declared he had seen the quarries in

question, which gave great weight to assertions hitherto somewhat doubtful, but which now assumed the garb of reality.

Such was the state of society in Paris at the period we bring before our readers, when Monte-Cristo went one evening to pay M. Danglars a visit. M. Danglars was out, but the count was asked to go and see the baroness, and he accepted the invitation.

It was never without a nervous shudder, since the dinner at Auteuil, and the events which followed it, that Madame Danglars heard Monte-Cristo's name announced. If he did not come, the painful sensation became more intense; if, on the contrary, he appeared, his noble countenance, his brilliant eyes, his amiability, his polite attention even towards Madame Danglars, soon dispelled every impression of fear. It appeared impossible to the baroness that a man of such delightfully pleasing manners should entertain evil designs against her; besides, the most corrupt minds only suspect evil when it would answer some interested end — useless injury is repugnant to every mind.

When Monte-Cristo entered the boudoir to which we have already once introduced our readers, and where the baroness was examining some drawings, which her daughter passed to her after having looked at them with M. Cavalcanti, his presence soon produced its usual effect; and it was with smiles that the baroness received the count, although she had been a little disconcerted at the announcement of his name.

The latter embraced the whole scene at a glance.

The baroness was partially reclining on a *causeuse*, Eugénie sat near her, and Cavalcanti was standing. Cavalcanti, dressed in black, like one of Goethe's heroes, with japanned shoes and open white silk stockings, passed a white and tolerably nice looking hand through his light hair, in the midst of which sparkled a diamond, which, in spite of Monte-Cristo's advice, the vain young man had been unable to resist putting on his little finger. This

movement was accompanied by killing glances at Mademoiselle Danglars, and sighs addressed to the same party.

Mademoiselle Danglars was still the same — cold, beautiful, and satirical. Not one of these glances, nor one sigh was lost on her; they might have been said to fall on the shield of Minerva, which some philosophers assert protected sometimes the breast of Sappho.

Eugenie bowed coldly to the count, and availed herself of the first moment when the conversation became earnest to escape to her study, whence very soon two cheerful and noisy voices being heard, in connection with some notes of the piano, assured Monte-Cristo that Mademoiselle Danglars preferred to his society and that of M. Cavalcanti, the company of Mademoiselle Louise d'Armilly, her singing governess.

It was then, especially while conversing with Madame Danglars, and apparently absorbed by the charm of the conversation, the count remarked M. Andrea Cavalcanti's solicitude, his manner of listening to the music at the door he dared not pass, and of manifesting his admiration.

The banker soon returned. His first look was certainly directed towards Monte-Cristo, but the second was for Andrea. As for his wife, he bowed to her, as some husbands do to their wives, but which bachelors will never comprehend until a very extensive code is published on conjugal life.

"Have not the ladies invited you to join them at the piano?" said Danglars to Andrea.

"Alas! no, sir," replied Andrea, with a sigh, still more remarkable than the former ones.

Danglars immediately advanced towards the door and opened it.

The two young ladies were seen seated on the same chair, at the piano, accompanying themselves, each with one hand, a fancy to which they had accustomed themselves, and performed admirably. Mademoiselle d'Armilly, whom they then perceived through the open doorway, formed with

Eugenie one of those living pictures of which the Germans are so fond. She was somewhat beautiful, and exquisitely genteel — a little fairy-like figure, with large curls falling on her neck, which was rather too long, as Perugino sometimes makes his Virgins, and her eyes dull from fatigue. She was said to have a weak chest, and like Antonia of the "Violon de Cremone," she would die one day while singing.

Monte-Cristo cast one rapid and curious glance around the sanctum; it was the first time he had ever seen Made-moiselle d'Armilly, of whom he had heard much.

"Well?" said the banker to his daughter, "are we then all to be excluded?"

He then led the young man into the study, and either by chance or manœuvre, the door was partially closed after Andrea, so that from the place where they sat, neither the count nor the baroness could see anything; but as the banker had accompanied Andrea, Madame Danglars appeared to take no notice of it.

The count soon heard Andrea's voice, singing a Corsican song, accompanied by the piano. While the count smiled at hearing this song, which made him lose sight of Andrea in the recollection of Benedetto, Madame Danglars was boasting to Monte-Cristo of her husband's strength of mind, who that very morning had lost three or four hundred thousand francs by a failure at Milan.

The praise was well deserved, for had not the count heard it from the baroness, or by one of those means by which he knew everything, the baron's countenance would not have led him to suspect it.

"Hem!" thought Monte-Cristo, "he begins to conceal his losses; a month since he boasted of them." Then, aloud:

"Oh! madame, M. Danglars is so skilful, he will soon regain at the Bourse what he loses elsewhere."

"I see you are maintaining an erroneous idea, as well as many more," said Madame Danglars.

"What is it?" said Monte-Cristo.

"That M. Danglars gambles, whereas he never plays."

"Truly, madame, I recollect M. Debray told me—*apropos*, what has become of him? I have seen nothing of him the last three or four days."

"Nor I," said Madame Danglars; "but you began a sentence, sir, and did not finish it."

"Which?"

"M. Debray had told you——"

"Truly, he told me it was you who sacrificed to the demon of the card-table."

"I was once very fond of it, but I do not play now."

"Then you are wrong, madame. Fortune is precarious, and if I were a woman, and fate had made me a banker's wife, whatever might be my confidence in my husband's good fortune, still in speculation, you know, there is great risk. Well! I would secure for myself a fortune independent of him, even if I acquired it by placing my interest in hands unknown to him."

Madame Danglars blushed, in spite of all her efforts.

"Stay," said Monte-Cristo, as though he had not observed her confusion; "I have heard of a lucky hit that was made yesterday on the Neapolitan bonds."

"I have none—nor have I ever possessed any; but really, we have talked long enough of money, count; we are like two stockbrokers; have you heard how fate is persecuting the poor Villeforts?"

"What has happened?" said the count, apparently ignorant of all.

"You know the Marquis of St. Meran died a few days after he had set out on his journey to Paris, and the marchioness a few days after her arrival?"

"Yes," said Monte-Cristo, "I have heard that; but, as Claudius said to Hamlet, 'it is a law of nature;' their fathers died before them, and they mourned their loss: they will die before their children, who will, in their turn, grieve for them."

"But that is not all."

"Not all!"

"No: they were going to marry their daughter ——"

"To M. Franz d'Epinau. Is it broken off?"

"Yesterday morning, it appears, Franz declined the honor."

"Indeed! And is the reason known?"

"No."

"How extraordinary! And how does M. de Villefort bear it?"

"As usual. Like a philosopher."

Danglars returned at this moment alone.

"Well?" said the countess, "do you leave M. Cavalcanti with your daughter?"

"And Mademoiselle d'Armilly," said the banker, "do you consider her no one?"

Then turning to Monte-Cristo, he said, "Prince Cavalcanti is a charming young man, is he not? but is he really a prince?"

"I will not answer for it," said Monte-Cristo. "His father was introduced to me as a marquis, so he ought to be a count; but I do not think he has much claim to that title."

"Why?" said the banker. "If he is a prince, he is wrong not to maintain his rank; I do not like any one to deny his origin."

"Oh! you are a pure democrat," said Monte-Cristo, smiling.

"But do you see to what you are exposing yourself?" said the countess. "If, perchance, M. de Morcerf came, he would find M. Cavalcanti in that room, where he, the betrothed of Eugenie, has never been admitted."

"You may well say, perchance," replied the banker: "for he comes so seldom, it would seem only chance that brings him."

"But should he come, and find that young man with your daughter, he might be displeased."

"He! you are mistaken; M. Albert would not do us the

honor to be jealous; he does not like Eugenie sufficiently. Besides, I care not for his displeasure."

"Still, situated as we are ——"

"Yes, do you know how we are situated? At his mother's ball he danced once with Eugenie, and M. Cavalcanti three times, and he took no notice of it."

The valet announced M. le Vicomte Albert de Morcerf.

The countess rose hastily, and was going into the study, when Danglars stopped her.

"Stay!" said he.

She looked at him in amazement.

Monte-Cristo appeared to be unconscious of what passed. Albert entered, looking very handsome, and in high spirits. He bowed politely to the countess, familiarly to Danglars, and affectionately to Monte-Cristo. Then turning to the countess:

"May I ask how Mademoiselle Danglars — is?" said he.

"She is quite well," replied Danglars, quickly; "she is at the piano with M. Cavalcanti."

Albert preserved his calm and indifferent manner; he might feel perhaps annoyed, but he knew Monte-Cristo's eyes were on him.

"M. Cavalcanti has a fine tenor voice," said he, "and Mademoiselle Eugenie a splendid soprano; and then she plays on the piano like Thalberg. The concert must be a delightful one."

"They suit each other remarkably well," said Danglars.

Albert appeared not to notice this remark, which was, however, so rude that Madame Danglars blushed.

"I, too," said the young man, "am a musician — at least my masters used to tell me so; but it is strange that my voice never would suit any other, and a soprano less than any."

Danglars smiled, and seemed to say, It is of no consequence.

Then, hoping, doubtless, to effect his purpose, he said :

"The prince and my daughter were universally admired yesterday. You were not of the party, M. de Morcerf!"

"What prince?" asked Albert.

"Prince Cavalcanti," said Danglars, who persisted in giving the young man that title.

"Pardon me," said Albert, "I was not aware he was a prince. And Prince Cavalcanti sang with Mademoiselle Eugenie yesterday? It must have been charming, indeed. I regret not having heard them. But I was unable to accept your invitation, having promised to accompany my mother to a German concert given by the Countess of Château-Renaud."

This was followed by rather an awkward silence.

"May I also be allowed," said Morcerf, "to pay my respects to Mademoiselle Danglars?"

"Wait a moment," said the banker, stopping the young man; "do you hear that delightful cavatina? Ta, ta, ta, ti, ta, ti, ta; it is charming; let them finish — one moment. Bravo! bravi! brava!"

The banker was enthusiastic in his applause.

"Indeed," said Albert, "it is exquisite; it is impossible to understand the music of his country better than Prince Cavalcanti does. You said prince, did you not? But he can easily become one if he is not already; it is no uncommon thing in Italy. But to return to the charming musicians — you should give us a treat, Danglars, without telling them there is a stranger. Ask them to sing one more song; it is so delightful to hear music in the distance, when the musicians are unrestrained by observation."

Danglars was quite annoyed by the young man's indifference.

He took Monte-Cristo aside.

"What do you think of our lover?" said he.

"He appears cool! But, then, your word is given."

"Yes, doubtless, I have promised to give my daughter to a man who loves her, but not to one who does not.

Even if Albert had Cavalcanti's fortune, he is so proud, I would not care to see him marry her."

"Oh!" said Monte-Cristo, "my fondness may blind me, but I assure you I consider Morcerf far preferable; and his father's position is good."

"Hem!" said Danglars.

"Why do you doubt?"

"The past — that obscurity on the past."

"But that does not affect the son. A month since you thought well of him; and I know nothing of young Cavalcanti, although you met him at my house."

"But I do."

"Have you made inquiry?"

"Yes, and I know him to be rich."

"What do you suppose him worth?"

"Fifty thousand per annum; and he is well educated."

"Hem!" said Monte-Cristo, in his turn.

"He is a musician."

"So are all Italians."

"Come, count, you do not do that young man justice."

"Well, I acknowledge it annoys me, knowing your connection with the Morcerf family, to see him throw himself in the way."

Danglars burst out laughing.

"What a Puritan you are?" said he; "that happens every day."

"But you cannot break it off thus; the Morcerfs are depending on this union."

"Indeed?"

"Positively."

"Then let them explain themselves. You should give the father a hint, you who are so intimate with the family."

"I — where the devil did you find that out?"

"At their ball; it was apparent enough. Why, did not the countess, the proud Mercedes, the disdainful Catalan, who will scarcely open her lips to her oldest acquaintances,

take your arm, lead you into the garden, into the private walks, and remain there for half an hour? But will you undertake to speak to the father?"

"Willingly, if you wish it."

"But let it be done explicitly and positively. If he demands my daughter, let him fix the day—declare his conditions; in short, let us either understand each other, or quarrel. You understand—no more delay."

"Yes, sir, I will give my attention to the subject."

"I do not say I expect him with pleasure, but I do expect him. A banker must, you know, be a slave to his promise."

And Danglars sighed as M. Cavalcanti had done half an hour before.

"Bravo!" cried Morcerf, as the scene closed.

Danglars began to look suspiciously at Morcerf, when some one came and whispered a few words to him.

"I shall soon return," said the banker to Monte-Cristo; "wait for me. I shall perhaps have something to say to you."

The baroness took advantage of her husband's absence to push open the door of her daughter's study, and M. Andrea, who was sitting before the piano with Mademoiselle Eugenie, started up like a spring.

Albert bowed to Mademoiselle Danglars with a smile, while she, not appearing in the least degree disturbed, returned his bow with her usual coolness.

Cavalcanti was evidently embarrassed; he bowed to Morcerf, who replied with the most impertinent look possible.

Then Albert launched out in praise of Mademoiselle Danglars's voice, and on his regret, after what he had just heard, that he had been unable to be present the previous evening.

Cavalcanti, being left alone, turned to Monte-Cristo.

"Come," said Madame Danglars, "leave music and compliments and let us go and take tea."

"Come, Louisa," said Mademoiselle Danglars to her friend.

They passed into the next drawing-room, where tea was prepared.

Just as they were beginning, in the English fashion, to leave the spoon in their cups, the door again opened and Danglars entered, visibly agitated. Monte-Cristo observed it particularly, and, by a look, asked the banker for an explanation.

"I have just received my courier from Greece," said Danglars.

"Ah! ah!" said the count; "that was the reason of your running away from us."

"Yes."

"How is King Otho?" asked Albert, in the most sprightly tone.

Danglars cast another suspicious look towards him without answering, and Monte-Cristo turned away to conceal the expression of pity which passed over his features, but which was gone in a moment.

"We shall go together, shall we not?" said Albert to the count.

"If you like," replied the latter.

Albert could not understand the banker's look, and turning to Monte-Cristo, who understood it perfectly:

"Did you see," said he, "how he looked at me?"

"Yes," said the count; "but did you think there was anything particular in his look?"

"Indeed I did: and what does he mean by his news from Greece?"

"How can I tell you?"

"Because I imagine you have correspondents in that country."

Monte-Cristo smiled significantly.

"Stop," said Albert, "here he comes. I shall compliment Mademoiselle Danglars on her cameo, while she is there to like to you."

"If you compliment her at all, let it be on her voice, at least," said Monte-Cristo.

"No, every one would do that."

"My dear viscount, you are dreadfully impertinent."

Albert advanced towards Eugenie, smiling.

Meanwhile, Danglars, stooping to Monte-Cristo's ear, "Your advice was excellent," said he: "there is a whole history connected with the names Fernand and Janina."

"Indeed!" said Monte-Cristo.

"Yes, I will tell you all; but take away the young man; I cannot endure his presence."

"He is going with me. Shall I send the father to you?"

"Immediately."

"Very well."

The count made a sign to Albert; they bowed to the ladies and took their leave; Albert perfectly indifferent to Mademoiselle Danglars's contempt; Monte-Cristo reiterating his advice to Madame Danglars on the prudence a banker's wife should exercise in providing for the future.

M. Cavalcanti remained master of the field.

CHAPTER LXXVII

HAYDEE.

SCARCELY had the count's horse cleared the angle of the boulevard, than Albert, turning towards the count, burst into a loud fit of laughter — most too loud, in fact, not to give the idea of its being rather forced and unnatural.

"Well!" said he, "I will ask you the same question which Charles IX. put to Catherine de Medicis, after the massacre of Saint Bartholomew. 'How have I played my little part?'"

"To what do you allude?" asked Monte-Cristo.

"To the installation of my rival at M. Danglars's!"

"What rival?"

"*Ma foi!* what rival? why, your protégé, M. Andrea Cavalcanti!"

"Ah! no joking, viscount, if you please; I do not patronize M. Andrea, — at least, not as concerns M. Danglars."

"And you would be to blame for not assisting him, if the young man really needed your help in that quarter; but, happily for me, he can dispense with it."

"What! do you think he is paying his addresses?"

"I am certain of it; his languishing looks and modulated tones, when addressing Mademoiselle Danglars, fully proclaim his intentions. He aspires to the hand of the proud Eugénie."

"What does that signify, so long as they favor your suit?"

"But it is not the case, my dear count; on the contrary, I am repulsed on all sides."

"What!"

"It is so, indeed; Mademoiselle Eugenie scarcely answers me, and Mademoiselle d'Armilly, her confidante, does not speak to me at all."

"But the father has the greatest regard possible for you," said Monte-Cristo.

"He! oh, no! he has plunged a thousand daggers into my heart, — tragedy-weapons, I own, which, instead of wounding, sheathe their points in their own handles, but daggers which he nevertheless believed to be real and deadly."

"Jealousy indicates affection."

"True, but I am not jealous."

"He is."

"Of whom? — of Debray?"

"No, of you."

"Of me? I will engage to say that before the week is past the door will be closed against me."

"You are mistaken, my dear viscount."

"Prove it to me."

"Do you wish me to do so?"

"Yes."

"Well! I am charged with the commission of endeavoring to induce M. le Comte de Morcerf to make some definite arrangements with the baron."

"By whom are you charged?"

"By the baron himself!"

"Oh!" said Albert, with all the cajolery of which he was capable. "You surely will not do that, my dear count?"

"Certainly I shall, Albert, as I have promised to do it."

"Well!" said Albert, with a sigh, "it seems you are determined to marry me."

"I am determined to try and be on good terms with everybody, at all events," said Monte-Cristo. "But *apropos* of Debray, how is it that I have not seen him lately at the baron's house?"

"There has been a misunderstanding."

"What, with the baroness?"

"No, with the baron."

"Has he perceived anything?"

"Ah! that is a good joke!"

"Do you think he suspects?" asked Monte-Cristo, with a charming *naïveté*.

"Where have you come from, my dear count?" said Albert.

"From Congo, if you will."

"It must be further off than even that."

"But what do I know of your Parisian husbands?"

"Oh! my dear count, husbands are pretty much the same everywhere; an individual husband of any country is a pretty fair specimen of the whole race."

"But, then, what can have led to the quarrel between Danglars and Debray? they seemed to understand each other so well!" said Monte-Cristo, with renewed energy.

"Ah! now you are trying to penetrate into the mysteries of Isis, in which I am not initiated. When M. Andrea Cavalcanti has become one of the family, you can ask him that question."

The carriage stopped.

"Here we are," said Monte-Cristo; "it is only half-past ten o'clock, come in."

"Certainly, I will."

"My carriage shall take you back."

"No, thank you; I gave orders for my *coupé* to follow me."

"There it is, then," said Monte-Cristo, as he stepped out of the carriage. They both went into the house; the drawing-room was lighted up — they entered it.

"You will make tea for us, Baptistin," said the count.

Baptistin left the room without waiting to answer, and in two seconds reappeared, bringing on a waiter all that his master had ordered, ready prepared, and appearing to have sprung from the ground, like the repasts which we read of in fairy tales.

"Really, my dear count," said Morcerf, "what I admire

in you is, not so much your riches — for perhaps there are people even wealthier than yourself, nor is it only your wit, for Beaumarchais might have possessed as much — but it is your manner of being served, without any questions, in a moment, in a second; it is as if they guessed what you wanted by your manner of ringing, and made a point of keeping everything you can possibly desire in constant readiness.”

“What you say is, perhaps, true; they know my habits. For instance, you shall see; how do you wish to occupy yourself during tea-time?”

“*Ma foi!* I should like to smoke.”

Monte-Cristo took the gong and struck it once. In about the space of a second a private door opened, and Ali appeared, bringing two chibouques filled with excellent latakia.

“It is quite wonderful!” said Albert.

“Oh, no; it is as simple as possible,” replied Monte-Cristo. “Ali knows I generally smoke while I am taking my tea or coffee; he has heard that I ordered tea, and he also knows that I brought you home with me; when I summoned him, he naturally guessed the reason of my doing so, and as he comes from a country where hospitality is especially manifested through the medium of smoking, he naturally concludes that we shall smoke in company, and therefore brings two chibouques instead of one — and now the mystery is solved.”

“Certainly you give a most commonplace air to your explanation, but it is not the less true that you — Ah! but what do I hear?” and Morcerf inclined his head towards the door, through which sounds seemed to issue resembling those of a guitar.

“*Ma foi!* My dear viscount, you are fated to hear music this evening; you have only escaped from the piano of Mademoiselle Danglars to be attacked by the guzla of Haydee.”

“Haydee! what an adorable name! Are there, then,

really women who bear the name of Haydee anywhere but in Byron's poems?"

"Certainly there are. Haydee is a very uncommon name in France, but it is common enough in Albania and Epirus; it is as if you said, for example, Chastity, Modesty, Innocence—it is a kind of baptismal name, as you Parisians call it."

"Oh, that is charming!" said Albert; "how I should like to hear my countrywomen called Mademoiselle Goodness, Mademoiselle Silence, Mademoiselle Christian Charity! Only think, then, if Mademoiselle Danglars, instead of being called Claire-Marie-Eugenie, had been named Mademoiselle Chastity-Modesty-Innocence Danglars, what a fine effect that would have produced on the announcement of her marriage!"

"Silence!" said the count, "do not joke in so loud a tone; Haydee may hear you, perhaps."

"And you think she would be angry?"

"No, certainly not," said the count, with a haughty expression.

"She is very amiable, then, is she not?" said Albert.

"It is not to be called amiability, it is her duty; a slave does not dictate to a master."

"Come! you are joking yourself now; are there any more slaves to be had who bear this beautiful name?"

"Undoubtedly."

"Really, count, you do nothing and have nothing like other people. The slave of M. le Comte de Monte-Cristo! why, it is a rank of itself in France; and from the way in which you lavish money, it is a place that must be worth a hundred thousand francs a year."

"A hundred thousand francs! the poor girl originally possessed much more than that; she was born to treasures in comparison with which those recorded in the 'Thousand and One Nights' would seem but poverty."

"She must be a princess, then?"

The first of these is the fact that the United States is a young nation, and its history is therefore a history of growth and development.

The second is the fact that the United States is a nation of immigrants, and its history is therefore a history of the struggle for a new identity.

The third is the fact that the United States is a nation of pioneers, and its history is therefore a history of the struggle for a new life.

The fourth is the fact that the United States is a nation of freedom, and its history is therefore a history of the struggle for a new liberty.

The fifth is the fact that the United States is a nation of progress, and its history is therefore a history of the struggle for a new future.

The sixth is the fact that the United States is a nation of peace, and its history is therefore a history of the struggle for a new world.

The seventh is the fact that the United States is a nation of justice, and its history is therefore a history of the struggle for a new order.

The eighth is the fact that the United States is a nation of hope, and its history is therefore a history of the struggle for a new dream.

The ninth is the fact that the United States is a nation of love, and its history is therefore a history of the struggle for a new heart.



"You are right; and she is one of the greatest in her country, too!"

"I thought so. But how did it happen that such a great princess became a slave?"

"How was it that Dionysius the Tyrant became a schoolmaster? The fortune of war, my dear viscount — the caprice of fortune; that is the way in which these things are to be accounted for."

"And is her name a secret?"

"As regards the generality of mankind, it is; but not for you, my dear viscount, who are one of my most intimate friends, and on whose silence I feel I may rely, if I consider it necessary to enjoin it; may I not do so?"

"Certainly! on my word of honor."

"You know the history of the pacha of Yanina, do you not?"

"Of Ali Tebelen! oh, yes! it was in his service that my father made his fortune."

"True, I had forgotten that."

"Well! what is Haydee to Ali Tebelen?"

"Merely his daughter."

"What! the daughter of Ali Pacha?"

"Of Ali Pacha and the beautiful Vasiliki."

"And your slave?"

"*Ma foi!* yes."

"But how did she become so?"

"Why, simply from the circumstance of my having bought her one day, as I was passing through the market at Constantinople."

"Wonderful! really, my dear count, you seem to throw a sort of magic influence over all in which you are concerned; when listening to you, existence no longer seems reality, but a waking dream. Now, I am perhaps going to make an imprudent and thoughtless request, but ——"

"Say on."

"But, since you go out with Haydee, and sometimes even take her to the opera ——"

"Well?"

"I think I may venture to ask you this favor."

"You may venture to ask me anything."

"Well, then, my dear count, present me to your princess."

"I will do so; but on two conditions."

"I accept them at once."

"The first is, that you will never tell any one that I have granted the interview."

"Very well," said Albert, extending his hand; "I swear I will not."

"The second is, that you will not tell her that your father ever served hers."

"I give you my oath that I will not."

"Enough, viscount; you will remember these two vows, will you not? But I know you to be a man of honor."

The count again struck the gong. Ali reappeared.

"Tell Haydee," said he, "that I will take coffee with her, and give her to understand that I desire permission to present one of my friends to her."

Ali bowed and left the room.

"Now, understand me," said the count, "no direct questions, my dear Morcerf; if you wish to know anything, tell me, and I will ask her."

"Agreed."

Ali reappeared for the third time, and drew back the tapestried hanging which concealed the door, to signify to his master and Albert that they were at liberty to pass on.

"Let us go in," said Monte-Cristo.

Albert passed his hand through his hair and curled his moustache, — then, having satisfied himself as to his personal appearance, followed the count into the room, the latter having previously resumed his hat and gloves. Ali was stationed as a kind of advanced guard, and the door was kept by the three French *femmes de chambre* commanded by Myrtho. Haydee was awaiting her visitors in

the first room of her suite of apartments, which was the drawing-room. Her large eyes were dilated with surprise and expectation, for it was the first time that any man, except Monte-Cristo, had been accorded an entrance into her presence. She was sitting on a sofa placed in an angle of the room, with her legs crossed under her in the Eastern fashion, and seemed to have made for herself, as it were, a kind of nest in the rich Indian silks which enveloped her. Near her was the instrument on which she had just been playing; it was elegantly fashioned, and worthy of its mistress. On perceiving Monte-Cristo, she rose and welcomed him with a kind of smile peculiar to herself, expressive at once of the most implicit obedience and also of the deepest love. Monte-Cristo advanced towards her and extended his hand, which she, as usual, raised to her lips.

Albert had proceeded no further than the door, where he remained, rooted to the spot, being completely fascinated by the sight of such surpassing beauty, beheld, as it was, for the first time, and of which an inhabitant of more northern climates could form no adequate idea.

"Whom do you bring?" asked the young girl in Romanic of Monte-Cristo; "is it a friend, a brother, a simple acquaintance, or an enemy?"

"A friend," said Monte-Cristo, in the same language.

"What is his name?"

"Count Albert; it is the same man whom I rescued from the hands of the banditti at Rome."

"In what language would you like me to converse with him?"

Monte-Cristo turned to Albert.

"Do you know modern Greek?" asked he.

"Alas! no," said Albert, "nor even ancient Greek, my dear count; never had Homer or Plato a more unworthy scholar than myself."

"Then," said Haydee, proving by her remark that she quite understood Monte-Cristo's question and Albert's an-

swer — “then I will speak either in French or Italian, if my lord so wills it.”

Monte-Cristo reflected one instant.

“You will speak in Italian,” said he. Then, turning towards Albert:

“It is a pity you do not understand either ancient or modern Greek, both of which Haydee speaks so fluently; the poor child will be obliged to talk to you in Italian, which will give you but a very false idea of her powers of conversation.”

The count made a sign to Haydee to address his visitor.

“Sir,” said she to Morcerf, “you are most welcome as the friend of my lord and master.”

This was said in excellent Tuscan, and with that soft Roman accent which makes the language of Dante as sonorous as that of Homer. Then, turning to Ali, she directed him to bring coffee and pipes; and when he had left the room to execute the orders of his young mistress, she beckoned Albert to approach nearer to her. Monte-Cristo and Morcerf drew their seats towards a small table, on which were arranged music, drawings, and vases of flowers. Ali then entered, bringing coffee and chibouques; as to M. Baptistin, this portion of the building was interdicted to him. Albert refused the pipe which the Nubian offered him.

“Oh, take it — take it,” said the count; “Haydee is almost as civilized as a Parisian; the smell of an Havana is disagreeable to her, but the tobacco of the East is a most delicious perfume, you know.”

Ali left the room. The cups of coffee were all prepared, with the addition of a sugar-glass, which had been brought for Albert. Monte-Cristo and Haydee took the liquor in the original Arabian manner, that is to say, without sugar. Haydee took the porcelain cup in her little slender fingers, and conveyed it to her mouth with all the innocent *naïveté* of a child when eating or drinking something which it likes. At this moment two women entered, bringing

salvers filled with ices and sherbert which they placed on two small tables appropriated to that purpose.

"My dear host, and you, signora," said Albert, in Italian, "excuse my apparent stupidity. I am quite bewildered, and it is natural that it should be so. Here I am in the heart of Paris; but a moment ago I heard the rumbling of the omnibuses and the tinkling of the bells of the lemonade-sellers, and now I feel as if I were suddenly transported to the East; not such as I have seen it, but such as my dreams have painted it. Oh! signora, if I could but speak Greek, your conversation, added to the fairy scene which surrounds me, would furnish an evening of such delight as it would be impossible for me ever to forget."

"I speak sufficient Italian to enable me to converse with you, sir," said Haydee, quietly; "and if you like what is Eastern, I will do my best to secure the gratification of your tastes while you are here."

"On what subject shall I converse with her?" said Albert in a low tone to Monte-Cristo.

"Just what you please; you may speak of her country and of her youthful reminiscences, or, if you like it better, you can talk of Rome, Naples, or Florence."

"Oh!" said Albert, "it is of no use to be in the company of a Greek if one converses just in the same style as with a Parisian; let me speak to her of the East."

"Do so, then, for of all themes which you could choose, that will be the most agreeable to her taste."

Albert turned towards Haydee.

"At what age did you leave Greece, signora?" asked he.

"I left it when I was but five years old," replied Haydee.

"And have you any recollection of your country?"

"When I shut my eyes and think, I seem to see it all again. The mind has its organ of vision as well as the body, with this additional perfection, that the objects presented to its view are indelibly impressed."

"And how far back into the past do your recollections extend?"

"I could scarcely walk when my mother, who was called Vasiliki, which means royal," said the young girl, tossing her head proudly, "took me by the hand, and after putting in our purse all the money we possessed, we went out, both covered with veils, to solicit alms for the prisoners, saying, 'He who giveth to the poor lendeth to the Lord.' Then, when our purse was full, we returned to the palace, and, without saying a word to my father, we sent it to the convent, where it was divided among the prisoners."

"And how old were you at that time?"

"I was three years old," said Haydee.

"Then you remember all that was passing around you when you were but three years old?" said Albert.

"All."

"Count," said Albert, in a low tone to Monte-Cristo, "do allow the signora to tell me something of her history. You prohibited my mentioning my father's name to her, but perhaps she will allude to him of her own accord in the course of the recital, and you have no idea how delighted I should be to hear our name pronounced by such beautiful lips."

Monte-Cristo turned to Haydee, and with an expression of countenance which commanded her to pay the most implicit attention to his words, he said in Greek:

"Tell us the fate of your father; but neither the name of the traitor nor the treason."

Haydee sighed deeply, and a shade of sadness clouded her beautiful brow.

"What are you saying to her?" said Morcerf, in an undertone.

"I again reminded her that you were a friend, and that she need not conceal anything from you."

"Then," said Albert, "this pious pilgrimage in behalf of the prisoners was your first remembrance; what is the next?"

"Oh! then I remember, as if it were but yesterday, sitting under the shade of some sycamore-trees, on the borders of a lake, in the waters of which the trembling foliage was reflected as in a mirror. Under the oldest and thickest of these trees, reclining on cushions, sat my father; my mother was at his feet, and I, child-like, amused myself by playing with his long white beard, which descended to his waist, or with the diamond hilt of the cimeter attached to his girdle. Then from time to time there came to him an Albanian, who said something to which I paid no attention, but which he always answered in the same tone of voice, either 'Kill' or 'Pardon.'"

"It is very strange," said Albert, "to hear such words proceed from the mouth of any one but an actress on the stage; and one needs constantly to be saying to one's self, 'This is no fiction, it is all reality,' in order to believe it. And how does France appear in your eyes, accustomed as they have been to gaze on such enchanted scenes?"

"I think it is a fine country," said Haydee; "but I see France as it really is, because I look on it with the eyes of a woman, whereas my own country, which I can only judge of from the impression produced on my childish mind, always seems enveloped in a doubtful atmosphere, which is luminous or otherwise, according as my remembrances of it are sad or joyous."

"So young," said Albert, forgetting at the moment the count's command that he should ask no questions of the slave herself, "is it possible that you can have known what suffering is except by name?"

Haydee turned her eyes towards Monte-Cristo, who, making at the same time some imperceptible sign, murmured:

"Go on!"

"Nothing is ever so firmly impressed on the mind as the memory of our early childhood, and, with the ex-

ception of the two scenes I have just described to you, all my earliest reminiscences are fraught with deepest sadness."

"Speak, speak, signora," said Albert, "I am listening with the most intense delight and interest to all you say."

Haydee answered his remark with a melancholy smile.

"You wish me, then, to relate the history of my past sorrows?" said she.

"I beg of you to do so," replied Albert.

"Well! I was but four years old, when one night I was suddenly awakened by my mother. We were in the palace of Yanina; she snatched me from the cushions on which I was sleeping, and on opening my eyes I saw hers were filled with tears. She took me away without speaking. When I saw her weeping, I began to cry, too. 'Silence, child!' said she. At other times, in spite of maternal endearments or threats, I had, with a child's caprice, been accustomed to indulge my feelings of sorrow or anger by crying as much as I felt inclined; but on this occasion there was an intonation of such extreme terror in my mother's voice when she enjoined me to silence, that I ceased crying as soon as her command was given. She bore me rapidly away. I saw then that we were descending a large staircase; around us were all my mother's servants carrying trunks, bags, ornaments, jewels, purses of gold, etc. etc., with which they were hurrying away in the greatest distraction. Behind the women came a guard of twenty men armed with long guns and pistols, and dressed in the costume which the Greeks have again assumed since they have become a nation. You may imagine there was something startling and ominous," said Haydee, shaking her head, and turning pale at the mere remembrance of the scene, "in this long file of slaves and women, only half aroused from sleep, or at least so they appeared to me, who was myself scarcely awake. Here and there, on the walls of the

staircase, were reflected gigantic shadows, which trembled in the flickering light of the pine torches, till they seemed to reach to the vaulted roof above.

“‘Quick!’ said a voice at the end of the gallery. This voice made every one bow before it, resembling in its effect the wind passing over a field of corn, by its superior strength forcing every ear to yield obeisance. As for me, it made me tremble. This voice was that of my father. He marched the last, clothed in his splendid robes, and holding in his hand the carbine with which your emperor presented him. He was leaning on the shoulder of his favorite Selim, and he drove us all before him, as a shepherd would his straggling flock. My father,” said Haydee, raising her head, “was that illustrious man known in Europe under the name of Ali Tebelen, Pacha of Yanina, and before whom Turkey trembled.”

Albert, without knowing why, started on hearing these words pronounced with such a haughty and dignified accent; it appeared to him as if there was something supernaturally gloomy and terrible in the expression which gleamed from the brilliant eyes of Haydee at this moment; she appeared like a Pythoness evoking a spectre, as she recalled to his mind the remembrance of the fearful death of this man, to the news of which all Europe had listened with horror.

“Soon,” said Haydee, “we halted on our march, and found ourselves on the borders of a lake. My mother pressed me to her throbbing heart, and, at the distance of a few paces, I saw my father, who was glancing anxiously around. Four marble steps led down to the water’s edge, and below them was a boat floating on the tide. From where we stood I could see in the middle of the lake a large black mass; it was the kiosk, to which we were going. This kiosk appeared to me to be at a considerable distance, perhaps on account of the darkness of the night, which prevented any object from being more than partially discerned.

"We stepped into the boat. I remember well that the oars made no noise whatever in striking the water, and when I leaned over to ascertain the cause, I saw they were muffled with the sashes of our Palicares. Besides the rowers, the boat contained only the women, my father, mother, Selim, and myself. The Palicares had remained on the shore of the lake, ready to cover our retreat; they were kneeling on the lowest of the marble steps, and in that manner intended making a rampart of the three others in case of pursuit.

"Our bark flew before the wind.

"'Why does the boat go so fast?' asked I, of my mother.

"'Silence, child! Hush! we are flying.'

"I did not understand. Why should my father fly? — he, the all-powerful — he, before whom others were accustomed to fly — he, who had taken for his device:

"'THEY HATE ME, THEN THEY FEAR ME!'"

"It was indeed a flight which my father was trying to effect. I have been told since, that the garrison of the castle of Yanina, fatigued with long service ——"

Here Haydee cast a significant glance at Monte-Cristo, whose eye had been riveted on her countenance during the whole course of her narrative. The young girl then continued, speaking slowly, like a person who is either inventing or suppressing some feature of the history which he is relating.

"You were saying, signora," said Albert, who was paying the most implicit attention to the recital, "that the garrison of Yanina, fatigued with long service ——"

"Had treated with the Seraskier Kourchid, who had been sent by the sultan to gain possession of the person of my father; it was then that Ali Tebelen took the resolution of retiring, after having sent to the sultan a French officer in whom he reposed great confidence, to the asylum

which he had long before prepared for himself, and which he called *kataphygion*, or the refuge."

"And this officer," asked Albert, "do you remember his name, signora?"

Monte-Cristo exchanged a rapid glance with the young girl, which was quite unperceived by Albert.

"No," said she, "I do not remember it just at this moment; but if it should occur to me presently, I will tell it you."

Albert was on the point of pronouncing his father's name, when Monte-Cristo gently held up his finger in token of reproach; the young man recollected his vow, and was silent.

"It was towards this kiosk that we were rowing.

"A ground floor, ornamented with arabesques, bathing its terraces in the water, and another floor, looking on the lake, was all that was visible to the eye. But beneath the ground floor, stretching out into the island, was a large subterraneous cavern, to which my mother, myself, and the women were conducted. In this place were together 60,000 purses and 200 barrels; the purses contained 25,000,000 of money in gold, and the barrels were filled with 30,000 pounds of gunpowder.

"Near these barrels stood Selim, my father's favorite, whom I mentioned to you just now. It was his duty to watch day and night a lance, at the end of which was a lighted match, and he had orders to blow up all, kiosk, guards, women, gold, and Tebelen himself, at the first signal given by my father. I remember well that the slaves, convinced of the precarious tenure on which they held their lives, passed whole days and nights in praying, crying, and groaning. As for me, I can never forget the pale complexion and black eye of the young soldier; and whenever the angel of death summons me to another world, I am quite sure I shall recognize Selim. I cannot tell you how long we remained in this state; at that period I did not even know what time meant. Sometimes, but very

rarely, my father summoned me and my mother to the terrace of the palace; these were my hours of recreation—I, who never saw anything in the dismal cavern but the gloomy countenance of the slaves and the fiery lance of Selim. My father was endeavoring to pierce with his eager looks the remotest verge of the horizon, examining attentively every black speck which appeared on the lake, while my mother, reclining by his side, rested her head on his shoulder, and I played at his feet, admiring everything I saw with that unsophisticated innocence of childhood which throws a charm around objects insignificant in themselves, but which in its eyes are invested with the greatest importance. The heights of Pindus towered above us; the castle of Yanina rose white and angular from the blue waters of the lake, and the immense masses of black vegetation which, viewed in the distance, gave the idea of lichens clinging to the rocks, were in reality gigantic fir-trees and myrtles.

“One morning my father sent for us. My mother had been crying all the night, and was very wretched. We found the pacha calm, but paler than usual.

“‘Take courage, Vasiliki,’ said he; ‘to-day arrives the firman of the master, and my fate will be decided. If my pardon be complete, we shall return triumphant to Yanina; if the news be inauspicious, we must fly this night.’

“‘But if our enemy should not allow us to do so?’ said my mother.

“‘Oh! make yourself easy on that head,’ said Ali, smiling; ‘Selim and his flaming lance will settle that matter. They would be glad to see me dead, but they would not like themselves to die with me.’

“My mother only answered by sighs to these consolations, which she knew did not come from my father’s heart. She prepared the iced water which he was in the habit of constantly drinking—for since his sojourn at the kiosk he had been parched by the most violent fever—after which she anointed his white beard with perfumed

oil, and lighted his chibouque, which he sometimes smoked for hours together, quietly watching the wreaths of vapor, which, ascending in spiral clouds, gradually mixed itself with the surrounding atmosphere. Presently he made such a sudden movement that I was paralyzed with fear. Then, without taking his eyes from the object which had first attracted his attention, he asked for his telescope. My mother gave it him, and as she did so, looked whiter than the marble against which she leaned.

"I saw my father's hand tremble.

" 'A boat! — two! — three! — ' murmured my father — 'four!'

"He then rose, seizing his arms and priming his pistols.

" 'Vasiliki,' said he to my mother, trembling perceptibly, 'the instant approaches which will decide everything. In the space of half an hour we shall know the emperor's answer. Go into the cavern with Haydee.'

" 'I will not quit you,' said Vasiliki; 'if you die, my lord, I will die with you.'

" 'Go to Selim!' cried my father.

" 'Adieu, my lord,' murmured my mother, determining quietly to await the approach of death.

" 'Take away Vasiliki,' said my father to his Palicares.

"As for me, I had been forgotten in the general confusion. I ran towards Ali Tebelen; he saw me hold out my arms to him, and he stooped down and pressed my forehead with his lips. Oh! how distinctly I remember that kiss! It was the last he ever gave me, and I feel as if it were still warm on my forehead. On descending, we distinguished through the lattice-work several boats, which were gradually becoming more distinct to our view. At first they appeared like black specks, and now they looked like birds skimming the surface of the waves.

"During this time, in the kiosk, at the feet of my father, were seated twenty Palicares, concealed from view by an angle of the wall, and watching with eager eyes the arrival of the boats. They were armed with their long

guns, inlaid with mother-of-pearl and silver, and cartouches in great numbers were lying scattered on the floor. My father looked at his watch, and paced up and down with a countenance expressive of the greatest anguish. This was the scene which presented itself to my view when I quitted my father after that last kiss. My mother and I traversed the gloomy passage leading to the cavern. Selim was still at his post, and smiled sadly on us as we entered. We fetched our cushions from the other end of the cavern, and sat down by Selim. In great dangers the devoted ones cling to each other; and young as I was, I quite understood that some imminent danger was hanging over our heads."

Albert had often heard, not from his father, for he never spoke on the subject, but from strangers, the description of the last moments of the Vizier of Yanina; he had read different accounts of his death, but this history seemed to borrow new life from the voice and expression of the young girl — the living accent and the melancholy expression of countenance at once charmed and horrified him.

As to Haydee, these terrible reminiscences seemed to have overpowered her for the moment, for she ceased speaking, her head leaning on her hand like a beautiful flower bowing beneath the violence of the storm, and her eyes, gazing on vacancy, indicated that she was mentally contemplating the green summit of the Pindus and the blue waters of the lake of Yanina, which, like a magic mirror, seemed to reflect the sombre picture which she sketched. Monte-Cristo looked at her with an indescribable expression of interest and pity.

"Go on," said the count, in the Romaic language.

Haydee looked up abruptly, as if the sonorous tones of Monte-Cristo's voice had awakened her from a dream, and she resumed her narrative:

"It was about four o'clock in the afternoon, and although the day was brilliant out of doors, we were enveloped in the gloomy darkness of the cavern. One solitary light

was burning there, and it appeared like a star set in a heaven of blackness; it was Selim's flaming lance. My mother was a Christian, and she prayed.

"Selim repeated from time to time these sacred words:

"'God is great!'

"However, my mother had still some hope. As she was coming down, she thought she recognized the French officer who had been sent to Constantinople, and in whom my father placed so much confidence, for he knew that all the soldiers of the French emperor were naturally noble and generous. She advanced some steps towards the staircase, and listened.

"'They are approaching,' said she; 'perhaps they bring us peace and liberty.'

"'What do you fear, Vasiliki?' said Selim, in a voice at once so gentle and yet so proud; 'if they do not give us peace, we will give them war; if they do not bring life, we will give them death.'

"And he renewed the flame of his lance with an alacrity which reminded one of the Dionysian festivals among the ancient Cretans. But I, who was only a little child, was terrified by this undaunted courage, which appeared to me both ferocious and senseless, and I recoiled with horror from the idea of the frightful death amid fire and flame which probably awaited us.

"My mother experienced the same sensations, for I felt her tremble.

"'Mamma, mamma!' said I, 'are we really to be killed?'

"And at the sound of my voice, the slaves redoubled their cries and prayers and lamentations.

"'My child,' said Vasiliki, 'may God preserve you from ever wishing for the death which to-day you so much dread!'

"Then, whispering to Selim, she asked what were his master's orders.

"'If he should send me his poniard, it will signify that

the emperor's intentions are not favorable to us, and I am at once to set fire to the powder; if, on the contrary, he send me his ring, it will be a sign that the emperor pardons him, and I extinguish the match and leave the magazine untouched.'

"'My friend,' said my mother, 'when your master's order arrives, if it is the poniard which he sends, instead of dispatching us by that horrible death which we both so much dread, you will mercifully kill us with this same poniard, will you not?'"

"'Yes, Vasiliki,' replied Selim, tranquilly.

"Suddenly we heard loud cries; we listened: they were cries of joy; the name of the French officer, who had been sent to Constantinople, resounded on all sides among our Palicares; it was evident that he brought the answer of the emperor, and that it was favorable."

"And do you not remember the Frenchman's name?" said Morcerf, quite ready to aid the memory of the narrator.

Monte-Cristo made a sign to him to be silent.

"I do not recollect it," said Haydee.

"The noise increased; steps were heard approaching nearer and nearer; they were descending the steps leading to the cavern.

"Selim made ready his lance.

"Soon a figure appeared in the gray twilight at the entrance of the cave, formed by the reflection of the few rays of daylight which had found their way into this gloomy retreat.

"'Who are you?' cried Selim. 'But whoever you may be, I charge you not to advance another step.'

"'Long live the emperor!' said the figure. 'He grants a full pardon to the Vizier Ali; and not only gives him his life, but restores to him his fortune and his possessions.'

"My mother uttered a cry of joy, and clasped me to her bosom.

"'Stop!' said Selim, seeing that she was about to go out, 'you see I have not yet received the ring.'

"'True,' said my mother. And she fell on her knees, at the same time holding me up towards heaven, as if she desired, while praying to God in my behalf, to raise me actually to his presence."

And for the second time Haydee stopped, overcome by such violent emotion that the perspiration stood upon her pale brow; and her stifled voice seemed hardly able to find utterance, so parched and dry were her throat and lips. Monte-Cristo poured a little iced water into a glass, and presented it to her, saying, with a mildness in which was also a shade of command:

"'Courage!'"

Haydee dried her eyes and continued:

"By this time our eyes, habituated to the darkness, had recognized the messenger of the pacha — it was a friend. Selim had also recognized him; but the brave young man only acknowledged one duty, which was to obey.

"'In whose name do you come?' said he to him.

"'I come in the name of our master, Ali Tebelen.'

"'If you come from Ali himself,' said Selim, 'you know what you were charged to remit to me?'"

"'Yes,' said the messenger, 'and I bring you his ring.'

"At these words he raised his hand above his head to show the token, but it was too far off, and there was not light enough to enable Selim, where he was standing, to distinguish and recognize the object presented to his view.

"'I do not see what you have in your hand,' said Selim.

"'Approach, then,' said the messenger, 'or I will come nearer to you, if you prefer it.'

"'I will agree to neither one nor the other,' replied the young soldier; 'place the object which I desire to see in the ray of light which shines there, and retire while I examine it.'

"'Be it so,' said the envoy; and he retired after

having first deposited the token agreed on in the place pointed out to him by Selim.

"Oh! how our hearts palpitated; for it did, indeed, seem to be a ring which was placed there. But was it my father's ring? that was the question.

"Selim, still holding in his hand the lighted match, walked towards the opening in the cavern, and, aided by the faint light which streamed in through the mouth of the cave, picked up the token.

"'It is well!' said he, kissing it; 'it is my master's ring!' And throwing the match on the ground, he trampled on it and extinguished it.

"The messenger uttered a cry of joy, and clapped his hands. At this signal four soldiers of the Seraskier Kourchid suddenly appeared, and Selim fell, pierced by five blows. Each man had stabbed him separately; and, intoxicated by their crime, though still pale with fear, they sought all over the cavern to discover if there was any fear of fire, after which they amused themselves by rolling on the bags of gold.

"At this moment my mother seized me in her arms, and bounding lightly along numerous turnings and windings, known only to ourselves, she arrived at a private staircase of the kiosk, where was a scene of frightful tumult and confusion. The lower rooms were entirely filled with the Tchodoars of Kourchid, that is to say, with our enemies. Just as my mother was on the point of pushing open a small door, we heard the voice of the pacha sounding in a loud and threatening tone. My mother applied her ear to the crack between the boards; I luckily found a small opening which afforded me a view of the apartment and what was passing within.

"'What do you want?' said my father to some people who were holding a paper inscribed with characters of gold.

"'What we want,' replied one of them, 'is to communicate to you the will of his highness. Do you see this firman?'

"‘I do,’ said my father.

"‘Well, read it; he demands your head.’

"My father answered with a loud laugh, which was more frightful than even threats would have been, and he had not ceased when two reports of a pistol were heard; he had fired them himself, and had killed two men.

"The Palicares, who were prostrated at my father’s feet, now sprung up and fired; and the room was filled with fire and smoke. At the same instant the firing began on the other side, and the balls penetrated the boards all around us.

"Oh! how noble did the Grand Vizier, my father, look at that moment, in the midst of the balls, his cimeter in his hand, and his face blackened with the powder of his enemies! And how he terrified them even then, and made them fly before him!

"‘Selim! Selim!’ cried he, ‘guardian of the fire, do your duty!’

"‘Selim is dead!’ replied a voice which seemed to come from the depths of the earth, ‘and you are lost, Ali!’ At the same moment an explosion was heard, and the flooring of the room in which my father was sitting was suddenly torn up and shivered to atoms; the Tchodoars were firing underneath; three or four Palicares fell, with their bodies literally plowed with wounds.

"My father howled aloud; he plunged his fingers into the holes which the balls had made and tore up one of the planks entire. But immediately through this opening twenty more shots were fired, and the flame, rushing up like fire from the crater of a volcano, soon gained the tapestry, which it quickly devoured. In the midst of all this frightful tumult and these terrific cries, two reports, fearfully distinct, followed by two shrieks more heartrending than all, froze me with terror; these two shots had mortally wounded my father, and it was he who had given utterance to these frightful cries. However, he remained stand-

ing, clinging to a window. My mother tried to force the door, that she might go and die with him, but it was fastened on the inside. All around him were lying the Palicars, writhing in convulsive agonies; while two or three, who were only slightly wounded, were trying to escape by springing from the windows. At this crisis the whole flooring suddenly gave way; my father fell on one knee, and at the same moment twenty hands were thrust forth, armed with sabres, pistols, and poniards—twenty blows were instantaneously directed against one man, and my father disappeared in a whirlwind of fire and smoke kindled by those demons, and which seemed like hell itself opening beneath his feet. I felt myself fall to the ground; it was my mother who had fainted."

Haydee's arms fell by her side, and she uttered a deep groan, at the same time looking towards the count, as if to ask if he were satisfied with her obedience to his commands. Monte-Cristo rose and approached her; he took her hand and said to her in Romaic:

"Calm yourself, my dear child, and take courage in remembering that there is a God who will punish traitors."

"It is a frightful story, count," said Albert, terrified at the paleness of Haydee's countenance, "and I reproach myself now for having been so cruel and thoughtless in my request."

"Oh, it is nothing!" said Monte-Cristo.

Then patting the young girl on the head, he continued:

"Haydee is very courageous; and she sometimes even finds consolation in the recital of her misfortunes."

"Because, my lord," said Haydee, eagerly, "my miseries recall to me the remembrance of your goodness."

Albert looked at her with curiosity, for she had not yet related what he most desired to know, namely, how she had become the slave of the count. Haydee saw at a glance the same expression pervading the countenance of her two auditors; she exclaimed:

"When my mother recovered her senses we were before the seraskier.

" 'Kill me,' said she, 'but spare the honor of the widow of Ali.'

" 'It is not to me to whom you must address yourself,' said Kourchid.

" 'To whom, then ?'

" 'To your new master.'

" 'Who and where is he ?'

" 'He is here.'

"And Kourchid pointed out one who had more than any contributed to the death of my father," said Haydee, in a tone of chastened anger.

"Then," said Albert, "you became the property of this man ?"

"No," replied Haydee, "he did not dare to keep us, so we were sold to some slave-merchants who were going to Constantinople. We traversed Greece, and arrived, half-dead, at the imperial gates. They were surrounded by a crowd of people, who opened a way for us to pass, when suddenly my mother, having directed her eye to the object which was attracting their attention, uttered a piercing cry and fell to the ground, pointing as she did so to a head which was placed over the gates, and beneath which were inscribed these words :

**" 'THIS IS THE HEAD OF ALI TEBELEN, PACHA OF
YANINA.'**

"I cried bitterly, and tried to raise my mother from the earth, but she was dead ! I was taken to the slave-market, and was purchased by a rich Armenian. He caused me to be instructed, gave me masters, and when I was thirteen years of age he sold me to the Sultan Mahmoud."

"Of whom I bought her," said Monte-Cristo, "as I told you, Albert, with the emerald which formed a match to

the one I had made into a box for the purpose of holding my pastilles of hashish."

"Oh! you are good! you are great, my lord!" said Haydee, kissing the count's hand, "and I am very fortunate in belonging to such a master."

Albert remained quite bewildered with all that he had seen and heard.

"Come! finish your cup of coffee," said Monte-Cristo; "the history is ended."

CHAPTER LXXVIII.

YANINA.

IF Valentine could have seen the trembling step and agitated countenance of Franz when he quitted the chamber of M. Noirtier, even she would have been constrained to pity him. Villefort had only just given utterance to a few incoherent sentences, and then retired to his study, where he received about two hours afterwards the following letter :

“After all the disclosures which were made this morning, M. Noirtier de Villefort must see the utter impossibility of any alliance being formed between his family and that of M. d’Epinay. M. d’Epinay must say that he is shocked and astonished that M. de Villefort, who appeared to be aware of all the circumstances detailed this morning, should not have anticipated him in this announcement.”

No one who had seen the magistrate at this moment, so thoroughly unnerved by the recent inauspicious combination of circumstances, would have supposed for an instant that he had anticipated the annoyance; although it certainly never had occurred to him that his father would carry candor, or rather rudeness, so far as to relate such a history. And in justice to Villefort it must be understood that M. Noirtier, who never cared for the opinion of his son on any subject, had always omitted to explain the affair to Villefort, so that he had all his life entertained the belief that the General de Quesnel or the Baron d’Epinay — as he was alternately styled, according as the

speaker wished to identify him by his own family name or by the title which had been conferred on him — fell the victim of assassination, and not that he was killed fairly in a duel. This harsh letter, coming as it did from a man generally so polite and respectful, struck a mortal blow at the pride of Villefort. Hardly had he read the letter when his wife entered. The sudden departure of Franz, after being summoned by M. Noirtier, had so much astonished every one, that the position of Madame de Villefort, left alone with the notary and the witnesses, became every moment more embarrassing. Determined to bear it no longer, she rose and left the room, saying she would go and make some inquiries into the cause of his sudden disappearance.

M. de Villefort's communications on the subject were very limited and concise; he told her, in fact, that an explanation had taken place between M. Noirtier, M. d'Epinaï, and himself, and that the marriage of Valentine and Franz would consequently be broken off. This was an awkward and unpleasant thing to have to report to those who were awaiting her return in the chamber of her father. She, therefore, contented herself with saying that M. Noirtier having, at the commencement of the discussion, been attacked by a sort of apoplectic fit, the affair would necessarily be deferred for some days longer. This news, false as it was, and following so singularly in the train of two similar misfortunes which had so recently occurred, evidently astonished the auditors, and they retired without a remark. During this time, Valentine, at once terrified and happy, after having embraced and thanked the feeble old man for thus breaking with a single blow the chain which she had been accustomed to consider as indissoluble, asked leave to retire to her own room in order to recover her composure; Noirtier looked the permission which she solicited. But instead of going to her own room, Valentine, having once gained her liberty, entered the gallery, and opening a small door at the end of it, found herself at

once in the garden. In the midst of all the strange events which had crowded one on the other, an indefinable sentiment of dread had taken possession of Valentine's mind. She expected every moment that she should see Morrel appear, pale and trembling, to forbid the signing of the contract, like the Laird of Ravenswood in "The Bride of Lammermoor." It was high time for her to make her appearance at the gate, for Maximilian had long awaited her coming. He had half guessed what was going on when he saw Franz quit the cemetery with M. de Villefort. He followed M. d'Epinay, saw him enter, afterwards go out, and then re-enter with Albert and Château-Renaud. He had no longer any doubts as to the nature of the conference; he therefore quickly resumed his original position, prepared to hear the result of the proceedings, and very certain that Valentine would hasten to him the first moment she would be set at liberty. He was not mistaken: his eye, which was peering through the crevices of the wooden partition, soon discovered the young girl, who, throwing aside all her usual precautions, walked at once to the gate. The first glance which Maximilian directed towards her entirely reassured him, and the first words she pronounced made his heart bound with delight.

"We are saved!" said Valentine.

"Saved!" repeated Morrel, not being able to conceive such intense happiness: "by whom?"

"By my grandfather. Oh, Morrel! pray, love him for all his goodness to us!"

Morrel swore to love him with all his soul; and at that moment he could safely promise to do so, for he felt as though it were not enough to love him merely as a friend or even as a father.

"But tell me, Valentine, how has it all been effected? what strange means has he used to compass this blessed end?"

Valentine was on the point of relating all that had passed, but she suddenly remembered that in doing so, she

must reveal a terrible secret which concerned others as well as her grandfather, and she said :

"At some future time I will tell you all about it."

"But when will that be?"

"When I am your wife."

The conversation had now turned upon a topic so pleasing to Morrel, that he was ready to accede to anything that Valentine thought fit to propose; and he likewise felt that a piece of intelligence such as he had just heard ought to be more than sufficient to content him for one day. However, he would not leave without the promise of seeing Valentine again the next night.

Valentine promised all that Morrel required of her, and certainly it was less difficult now for her to believe that she should marry Maximilian than it was an hour ago to assure herself that she should not marry Franz.

During the time occupied by the interview we have just detailed, Madame de Villefort had gone to visit M. Noirtier. The old man looked at her with that stern and forbidding expression with which he was accustomed to receive her.

"Sir," said she, "it is superfluous for me to tell you that Valentine's marriage is broken off, since it was here that the affair was concluded."

Noirtier's countenance remained immovable.

"But one thing I can tell you, of which I do not think you are aware; that is, that I have always been opposed to this marriage, and that the contract was entered into entirely without my consent or approbation."

Noirtier regarded his daughter-in-law with the look of a man desiring an explanation.

"Now that this marriage, which I know you so much disliked, is done away with, I come to you on an errand which neither M. de Villefort nor Valentine could consistently undertake."

Noirtier's eyes demanded the nature of her mission.

"I come to entreat you, sir," continued Madame de Villefort, "as the only one who has the right of doing

so, inasmuch as I am the only one who will receive no personal benefit from the transaction — I come to entreat you to restore, not your love, for that she has always possessed, but to restore your fortune to your grand-daughter.”

There was a doubtful expression in Noirtier's eyes; he was evidently trying to discover the motive of this proceeding, and he could not succeed in doing so.

“May I hope, sir,” said Madame de Villefort, “that your intentions accord with my request?”

Noirtier made a sign that they did.

“In that case, sir,” rejoined Madame de Villefort, “I will leave you, overwhelmed with gratitude and happiness at your prompt acquiescence to my wishes.”

She then bowed to M. Noirtier and retired.

The next day M. Noirtier sent for the notary; the first will was torn up and a second made, in which he left the whole of his fortune to Valentine, on condition that she should never be separated from him. It was then generally reported that Mademoiselle de Villefort, the heiress of the Marquis and Marchioness de Saint-Meran, had regained the good graces of her grandfather, and that she would ultimately be in possession of an income of 300,000 livres.

While all the proceedings relative to the dissolution of the marriage-contract were being carried on at the house of M. de Villefort, Monte-Cristo had paid his visit to the Count de Morcerf, who, in order to lose no time in responding to M. Danglars's wishes, and at the same time to pay all due deference to his position in society, donned his uniform of lieutenant-general, which he ornamented with all his crosses, and, thus attired, ordered his finest horses and drove to the Rue de la Chaussée d'Antin. Danglars was balancing his monthly accounts, and it was, perhaps, not the most favorable moment for finding him in his best humor. At the first sight of his old friend, Danglars assumed his majestic air, and settled himself in his easy-chair.

Morcerf, usually so stiff and formal, accosted the banker in an affable and smiling manner, and feeling sure that the overture he was about to make would be well received, he did not consider it necessary to adopt any manœuvres in order to gain his end, but went at once straight to the point.

"Well, baron," said he, "here I am at last; some time has elapsed since our plans were formed, and they are not yet executed."

Morcerf paused at these words, quietly waiting till the cloud should have dispersed which had gathered on the brow of Danglars, and which he attributed to his silence; but, on the contrary, to his great surprise, it grew darker and darker.

"To what do you allude, M. le comte?" said Danglars; as if he were trying in vain to guess at the possible meaning of the general's words.

"Ah!" said Morcerf; "I see you are a stickler for forms, my dear sir, and you would remind me that the ceremonial rites should not be omitted. *Ma foi!* I beg your pardon, but as I have but one son, and it is the first time I have ever thought of marrying him, I am still serving my apprenticeship, you know: come, I will reform." And Morcerf, with a forced smile, rose, and, making a low bow to M. Danglars, said:

"M. le baron, I have the honor of asking of you the hand of Mademoiselle Eugenie Danglars for my son, Viscount Albert de Morcerf."

But Danglars, instead of receiving this address in the favorable manner which Morcerf had expected, knit his brow, and without inviting the count, who was still standing, to take a seat, he said:

"M. le comte, it will be necessary to reflect before I give you an answer."

"To reflect!" said M. Morcerf, more and more astonished; "have you not had enough time for reflection during the eight years which have elapsed since this marriage was first discussed between us?"

"M. le comte," said the banker, "things are constantly occurring in the world to induce us to lay aside our most established opinions, or, at all events, to cause us to remodel them according to the change of circumstances, which may have placed affairs in a totally different light to that in which we at first viewed them."

"I do not understand you, M. le baron," said Morcerf.

"What I mean to say is this, sir: that during the last fortnight unforeseen circumstances have occurred ——"

"Excuse me," said Morcerf; "but is it a play we are acting?"

"A play?"

"Yes, for it is like one; pray let us come more to the point, and endeavor thoroughly to understand each other."

"That is quite my desire."

"You have seen M. de Monte-Cristo, have you not?"

"I see him very often," said Danglars, drawing himself up; "he is a particular friend of mine."

"Well, in one of your late conversations with him, you said that I appeared to be forgetful and irresolute concerning this marriage: did you not?"

"I did say so."

"Well, here I am proving at once that I am really neither the one nor the other, by entreating you to keep your promise on that score."

Danglars did not answer.

"Have you so soon changed your mind," added Morcerf, "or have you only provoked my request that you may have the pleasure of seeing me humbled?"

Danglars, seeing that if he continued the conversation in the same tone in which he had begun it, the whole thing might turn out to his own disadvantage, turned to Morcerf, and said:

"M. le comte, you must doubtless be surprised at my reserve; and I assure you it costs me much to act in such a manner towards you, but believe me when I say

that imperative necessity has imposed the painful task upon me."

"These are all so many empty words, my dear sir," said Morcerf; "they might satisfy a new acquaintance, but the Count de Morcerf does not rank in that list; and when a man like him comes to another, recalls to him his plighted word, and this man fails to redeem the pledge, he has, at least, a right to exact from him a good reason for so doing."

Danglars was a coward, but did not wish to appear so; he was piqued at the tone which Morcerf had just assumed.

"I am not without good reason for my conduct," replied the banker.

"What do you mean to say?"

"I mean to say that I have a good reason, but that it is difficult to explain."

"You must be aware, at all events, that it is impossible for me to understand motives before they are explained to me; but one thing at least is clear, which is, that you decline allying yourself with my family?"

"No, sir," said Danglars; "I merely suspend my decision, that is all."

"And do you really flatter yourself that I shall yield to all your caprices, and quietly and humbly await the time of again being received into your good graces?"

"Then, M. le comte, if you will not wait, we must look upon these projects as if they had never been entertained."

The count bit his lips till the blood almost started, to prevent the ebullition of anger which his proud and irritable temper scarcely allowed him to restrain; understanding, however, that in the present state of things the laugh would decidedly be against him, he turned from the door, towards which he had been directing his steps, and again confronted the banker. A cloud settled on his brow, evincing decided anxiety and uneasiness, instead of the expression of offended pride which had lately reigned there.

"My dear Danglars," said Morcerf, "we have been acquainted for many years, and consequently we ought

to make some allowances for each other's failings. You owe me an explanation, and really it is but fair that I should know what circumstance has occurred to deprive my son of your favor."

"It is from no personal ill-feeling towards the viscount, that is all I can say, sir," replied Danglars, who resumed his insolent manner as soon as he perceived that Morcerf was a little softened and calmed down.

"And towards whom do you bear this personal ill-feeling, then?" said Morcerf, turning pale with anger.

The expression of the count's face had not remained unperceived by the banker; he fixed on him a look of greater assurance than before, and said:

"You may, perhaps, be better satisfied that I should not go further into particulars."

A trembling, caused by repressed rage, shook the whole frame of the count, and making a violent effort over himself, he said:

"I have a right to insist on your giving me an explanation. Is it Madame de Morcerf who has displeased you? Is it my fortune which you find insufficient? Is it because my opinions differ from yours?"

"Nothing of the kind, sir," replied Danglars; "if such had been the case, I only should have been to blame, inasmuch as I was aware of all these things when I made the engagement. No, do not seek any longer to discover the reason. I really am quite ashamed to have been the cause of your undergoing such severe self-examination; let us drop the subject, and adopt the middle course, namely, delay, which implies neither a rupture nor an engagement. *Ma foi!* there is no hurry. My daughter is only seventeen years old, and your son twenty-one. While we wait, time will be progressing, events will succeed each other; things which in the evening look dark and obscure appear but too clearly in the light of the morning, and sometimes the utterance of one word, or the lapse of a single day, will reveal the most cruel calumnies."

"Calumnies, did you say, sir?" cried Morcerf, turning livid with rage. "Does any one dare to slander me?"

"M. le comte, I told you that I considered it best to avoid all explanation."

"Then, sir, I am patiently to submit to your refusal?"

"Yes, sir, although I assure you the refusal is as painful for me to give as it is for you to receive, for I had reckoned on the honor of your alliance, and the breaking off of a marriage-contract always injures the lady more than the gentleman."

"Enough, sir," said Morcerf; "we will speak no more on the subject." And clinching his gloves with passion, he left the apartment.

Danglars remarked that during the whole conversation, Morcerf had never once dared to ask if it were on his own account that Danglars recalled his word. That evening there was a long conference between several friends, and M. Cavalcanti, who had remained in the drawing-room with the ladies, was the last to leave the house of the banker.

The next morning, directly he awoke, Danglars asked for the newspapers; they were brought to him; he laid aside three or four, and at last fixed on "*l'Impartial*;" it was the paper of which Beauchamp was the chief editor. He hastily tore off the cover, opened the journal with nervous precipitation, passed contemptuously over *le premier Paris*, and arriving at the miscellaneous intelligence, stopped, with a malicious smile, at the paragraph headed "*YANINA*."

"Very good!" observed Danglars, after having read the paragraph; "here is a little article on Colonel Fernand, which, if I am not mistaken, would have rendered the explanation which the Count de Morcerf required of me perfectly unnecessary."

At the same moment—that is, at nine o'clock in the morning—Albert de Morcerf, dressed in a black coat buttoned up to his chin, might have been seen walking with

a quick and agitated step in the direction of Monte-Cristo's house in the Champs Elysées. When he presented himself at the gate, the porter informed him that the count had gone out about half an hour previously

"Did he take Baptistin with him?"

"No, M. le vicomte."

"Call him, then; I wish to speak to him."

The concierge went to seek the valet de chambre, and returned with him in an instant.

"My good friend," said Albert, "I beg pardon for my intrusion; but I was anxious to know from your own mouth if your master is really out or not."

"He is really out, sir," replied Baptistin.

"Out, even to me?"

"I know how happy my master always is to receive M. le vicomte," said Baptistin; "and I should, therefore, never think of including him in any general order."

"You are right; and now I wish to see him on an affair of great importance; do you think it will be long before he comes in?"

"No, I think not; for he ordered his breakfast at ten o'clock."

"Well, I will go and take a turn in the Champs Elysées, and at ten o'clock I will return here; meanwhile, if M. le comte should come in, will you beg him not to go out again without seeing me?"

"You may depend on my doing so, sir," said Baptistin.

Albert left the *fiacre* in which he had come standing at the door of the count, intending to take a turn on foot. As he was passing the Allée des Veuves, he thought he saw the count's horses standing at Gossett's shooting-gallery; he approached and soon recognized the coachman.

"Is M. le comte shooting in the gallery?" said Morcerf.

"Yes, sir," replied the coachman.

While he was speaking, Albert had heard the report of two or three pistol-shots. He entered, and on his way met the waiter.

"Excuse me, M. le comte," said the lad, "but will you have the kindness to wait a moment?"

"What for, Philip?" asked Albert, who, being a constant visitor there, did not understand this opposition to his entrance.

"Because the person who is now in the gallery prefers being alone, and never practises in the presence of any one."

"Not even before you, Philip? Then who loads his pistols?"

"His servant."

"A Nubian?"

"A negro."

"It is he, then."

"Do you know this gentleman?"

"Yes, and I am come to look for him; he is a friend of mine."

"Oh! that is quite another thing, then. I will go immediately and inform him of your arrival."

And Philip, urged by his own curiosity, entered the gallery; a second afterwards, Monte-Cristo appeared on the threshold.

"I ask your pardon, my dear count," said Albert, "for following you here; and I must first tell you that it was not the fault of your servants that I did so; I alone am to blame for the indiscretion. I went to your house, and they told me you were out, but that they expected you home at ten o'clock, to breakfast. I was walking about in order to pass away the time till ten o'clock, when I caught sight of your carriage and horses."

"What you have just said induces me to hope that you intend breakfasting with me."

"No, thank you, I am thinking of other things besides breakfast, just now; perhaps we may take that meal at a later hour and in worse company."

"What on earth are you talking of?"

"I am to fight to-day."

"What for?"

"I am going to fight ——"

"Yes, I understand that, but what is the quarrel? People fight for all sorts of reasons, you know."

"I fight in the cause of honor."

"Ah! that is something serious."

"So serious, that I come to beg you to render me a service."

"What is it?"

"To be my second."

"That is a serious matter, and we will not discuss it here; let us speak of nothing till we get home. Ali, bring me some water."

The count turned up his sleeves, and passed into the little vestibule where the gentlemen were accustomed to wash their hands after shooting.

"Come in, M. le vicomte," said Philip, in a low tone, "and I will show you something droll."

Morcerf entered, and instead of the usual mark, he perceived some playing-cards fixed against the wall. At a distance Albert thought it was a complete suit, for he counted from the ace to the ten.

"Ah!" said Albert, "I see you were preparing for a game of cards."

"No," said the count, "I was making a suit of cards."

"How?" said Albert.

"Those are really aces and twos which you see, but my balls have turned them into threes, fives, sevens, eights, nines, and tens."

Albert approached.

In fact the balls had actually pierced the cards in the exact places which the painted signs would otherwise have occupied, the lines and distances being as regularly kept as if they had been ruled with a pencil.

"*Diable!*" said Morcerf.

"What would you have, my dear viscount?" said Monte-Cristo, wiping his hands on the towel which Ali

had brought him; "I must occupy my leisure moments in some way or other. But come, I am waiting for you."

Both then entered Monte-Cristo's chariot, which in the course of a few minutes deposited them safely at No. 30. Monte-Cristo took Albert into his study, and, pointing to a seat, placed another for himself.

"Now let us talk the matter over quietly," said the count.

"You see I am perfectly composed," said Albert.

"With whom are you going to fight?"

"With Beauchamp."

"Is he one of your friends?"

"Of course; it is always with friends that one fights."

"I suppose you have some cause of quarrel?"

"I have."

"What has he done to you?"

"There appeared in this journal last night — but wait, read for yourself."

Albert handed over the paper to the count, who read as follows:

"A correspondent at Yanina informs us of a fact of which until now we had remained in ignorance. The castle which formed the protection of the town was given up to the Turks by a French officer named Fernand, in whom the Grand Vizier, Ali Tebelen, had reposed the greatest confidence."

"Well," said Monte Cristo, "what do you see in that to annoy you?"

"What do I see in it?"

"Yes; what does it signify to you if the castle of Yanina was given up by a French officer?"

"It signifies to my father, the Count of Morcerf, whose Christian name is Fernand!"

"Did your father serve Ali Pacha?"

"Yes; that is to say, he fought for the independence of the Greeks, and hence arises the calumny."

"Oh, my dear viscount, do talk reason!"

"I do not desire to do otherwise."

"Now just tell me, who the devil should know in France that the officer Fernand and the Count de Morcerf are one and the same person? and who cares now about Yanina, which was taken so long ago as the year 1822 or 1823?"

"That just proves the blackness of the perfidy; they have allowed all this time to elapse, and then, all of a sudden, rake up events which have been forgotten, to furnish materials for scandal, in order to tarnish the lustre of our high position. I inherit my father's name, and I do not choose that the shadow of disgrace should darken it. I am going to Beauchamp, in whose journal this paragraph appears, and I shall insist on his retracting the assertion before two witnesses."

"Beauchamp will never retract."

"Then he must fight."

"No, he will not, for he will tell you, what is very true, that perhaps there were fifty officers in the Greek army bearing the same name."

"We will fight, nevertheless. I will efface that blot on my father's character. My father, who was such a brave soldier, whose career was so brilliant——"

"Oh, well, he will add, 'We are warranted in believing that this Fernand is not the illustrious Count de Morcerf, who also bears the same Christian name.'"

"I am determined not to be content with anything short of an entire retraction."

"And you intend to make him do it in the presence of two witnesses, do you?"

"Yes."

"You do wrong."

"Which means, I suppose, that you refuse the service which I asked of you?"

"You know my theory regarding duels; I told you my opinion on that subject, if you remember, when we were at Rome."

"Nevertheless, my dear count, I found you this morn-

ing engaged in an occupation but little consistent with the notions you profess to entertain."

"Because, my dear fellow, you understand one must never be eccentric. If one's lot is cast among fools, it is necessary to study folly. I shall perhaps find myself one day called out by some harebrained scamp, who has no more real cause of quarrel with me than you have with Beauchamp; he may take me to task for some foolish trifle or other; he will bring his witnesses, or will insult me in some public place, and I suppose I am expected to kill him for all that."

"You admit that you would fight, then? Well, if so, why do you object to my doing so?"

"I do not say that you ought not to fight, I only say that a duel is a serious thing, and ought not to be undertaken without due reflection."

"Did he reflect before he insulted my father?"

"If he spoke hastily, and owns that he did so, you ought to be satisfied."

"Ah, my dear count! you are far too indulgent."

"And you are far too exacting. Supposing, for instance, and do not be angry at what I am going to say ——"

"Well?"

"Supposing the assertion be really true?"

"A son ought not to submit to such a stain on his father's honor."

"*Ma foi!* we live in times when there is much to which we must submit."

"That is precisely the fault of the age."

"And do you undertake to reform it?"

"Yes, as far as I am personally concerned."

"*Ma foi!* you are indeed rigid, my dear fellow."

"Well, I own it!"

"Are you quite impervious to good advice?"

"Not when it comes from a friend."

"And do you accord me that title?"

"Certainly I do."

"Well, then, before going to Beauchamp with your witnesses, seek further information on the subject."

"From whom?"

"From Haydee."

"Why, what can be the use of mixing a woman up in the affair — what can she do in it?"

"She can declare to you, for example, that your father had no hand whatever in the defeat and death of the vizier, or if by chance he had indeed the misfortune to ——"

"I have already told you, my dear count, that I would not for one moment admit of such a supposition."

"You reject this means of information, then?"

"I do — most decidedly."

"Then let me offer one more word of advice."

"Do so, then, but let it be the last."

"You do not wish to hear it, perhaps?"

"On the contrary, I request it."

"Do not take any witnesses with you when you go to Beauchamp — visit him alone."

"That would be contrary to all custom."

"Your case is not an ordinary one."

"And what is your reason for advising me to go alone?"

"Because then the affair will rest between you and Beauchamp."

"Explain yourself."

"I will do so. If Beauchamp be disposed to retract, you ought at least to give him the opportunity of doing it of his own free will; the satisfaction to you will be the same; if, on the contrary, he refuses to do so, it will then be quite time enough to admit two strangers into your secret."

"They will not be strangers — they will be friends."

"Ah! but the friends of to-day are the enemies of to-morrow; Beauchamp, for instance."

"So you recommend —— "

"I recommend you to be prudent."

"Then you advise me to go alone to Beauchamp?"

"I do, and I will tell you why. When you wish to obtain some concession from a man's self-love, you must avoid even the appearance of wishing to wound it."

"I believe you are right."

"I am glad of it."

"Then I will go alone."

"Go; but you would do better still by not going at all."

"That is impossible."

"Do so, then; it will be a wiser plan than the first which you proposed."

"But if, in spite of all my precautions, I am at last obliged to fight, will you not be my second?"

"My dear viscount," said Monte-Cristo, gravely, "you must have seen before to-day that at all times and in all places I have been at your disposal, but the service which you have just demanded of me is one which it is out of my power to render you."

"Why?"

"Perhaps you may know at some future period, and in the meantime I request you to excuse my declining to put you in possession of my reasons."

"Well, I will have Franz and Château-Renaud; they will be the very men for it."

"Do so, then."

"But if I do fight you will surely not object to giving me a lesson or two in shooting and fencing?"

"That, too, is impossible."

"What a singular being you are! — you will not interfere in anything."

"You are right — that is the principle on which I wish to act."

"We will say no more about it, then. Good-bye, count."
Morcerf took his hat, and left the room. He found

his chariot at the door, and doing his utmost to restrain his anger, he drove at once to Beauchamp's house.

Beauchamp was in his office. It was one of those gloomy, dusty-looking apartments, such as journalists' offices have always been from time immemorial.

The servant announced M. Albert de Morcerf. Beauchamp repeated the name to himself, as though he could scarcely believe that he had heard aright, and then gave orders for him to be admitted.

Albert entered.

Beauchamp uttered an exclamation of surprise on seeing his friend leap over and trample under foot all the newspapers which were strewed about the room.

"Here! here! my dear Albert!" said he, holding out his hand to the young man. "Are you out of your senses, or do you come peaceably to take breakfast with me? Try and find a seat—there is one by that geranium, which is the only thing in the room to remind me that there are other leaves in the world besides leaves of paper."

"Beauchamp," said Albert, "it is of your journal that I come to speak."

"Indeed! what do you wish to say about it?"

"I desire that a statement contained in it should be rectified."

"To what do you allude? But pray sit down."

"Thank you," said Albert, with a cold and formal bow.

"Will you now have the kindness to explain the nature of the statement which has displeased you?"

"An announcement has been made which implicates the honor of a member of my family."

"What is it?" said Beauchamp, much surprised; "surely you must be mistaken."

"It is an article headed Yanina."

"Yanina?"

"Yes; really, you appear to be totally ignorant of the cause which brings me here."

"Such is really the case, I assure you, upon my honor! Baptiste, give me yesterday's paper," cried Beauchamp.

"Here, I have brought mine with me," replied Albert.

Beauchamp took the paper, and read the article to which Albert pointed, in an undertone.

"You see it is a serious annoyance," said Morcerf, when Beauchamp had finished the perusal of the paragraph.

"Is the officer alluded to a relation of yours?" demanded the journalist.

"Yes," said Albert, blushing.

"Well, what do you wish me to do for you?" said Beauchamp, mildly.

"My dear Beauchamp, I wish you to contradict this statement."

Beauchamp looked at Albert with a benevolent expression.

"Come," said he, "this matter will want a good deal of talking over; a retraction is always a serious thing, you know. Sit down, and I will read it again."

Albert resumed his seat, and Beauchamp read, with more attention than at first, the lines denounced by his friend.

"Well," said Albert, in a determined tone, "you see that your paper has insulted a member of my family, and I insist on a retraction being made."

"You insist?"

"Yes, I insist."

"Permit me to remind you that you are not in the Chamber, my dear viscount."

"Nor do I wish to be there," replied the young man, rising. "I repeat that I am determined to have the announcement of yesterday contradicted. You have known me long enough," continued Albert, biting his lips convulsively, for he saw that Beauchamp's anger was beginning to rise — "you have been my friend, and, therefore,

sufficiently intimate with me to be aware that I am likely to maintain my resolution in this point."

"If I have been your friend, Morcerf, your present manner of speaking would almost lead me to forget that I ever bore that title. But wait a moment, do not let us get angry, or, at least, not yet. You are irritated and vexed — tell me how this Fernand is related to you?"

"He is merely my father," said Albert; "M. Fernand Mondego, Count de Morcerf, an old soldier, who has fought in twenty battles, and whose honorable scars they would denounce as badges of disgrace."

"Is it your father?" said Beauchamp; "that is quite another thing. Then I can well understand your indignation, my dear Albert. I will re-peruse;" and he read the paragraph for the third time, laying a stress on each word as he proceeded. "But the paper nowhere identifies this Fernand with your father."

"No, but the connection will be seen by others, and, therefore, I will have the article contradicted."

At the words *I will*, Beauchamp steadily raised his eyes to Albert's countenance, and then as gradually lowering them, he remained thoughtful for a few moments.

"You will retract this assertion, will you not, Beauchamp?" said Albert, with increased though stifled anger.

"Yes," replied Beauchamp.

"Immediately?" said Albert.

"When I am convinced the statement is false."

"What?"

"The thing is worth looking into, and I will take pains to investigate the matter thoroughly."

"But what is there to investigate, sir?" said Albert, enraged beyond measure at Beauchamp's last remark. "If you do not believe it is my father, say so immediately; and if, on the contrary, you believe it to be him, state your reasons for doing so."

Beauchamp looked at Albert with the smile that was

so peculiar to him, and which, in its numerous modifications, served to express every varied feeling of his mind.

"Sir," replied he, "if you came to me with the idea of demanding satisfaction, you should have gone at once to the point, and not have entertained me with the idle conversation to which I have been patiently listening for the last half-hour. Am I to put this construction on your visit?"

"Yes, if you will not consent to retract that infamous calumny."

"Wait a moment — no threats, if you please, M. Fernand Mondego, Vicomte de Morcerf; I never allow them from my enemies, and, therefore, shall not put up with them from my friends. You insist on my contradicting the article relating to General Fernand, an article in which, I assure you, on my word of honor, I have not taken the slightest share?"

"Yes, I insist on it!" said Albert, whose mind was beginning to get bewildered with the excitement of his feelings.

"And if I refuse to retract, you wish to fight, do you?" said Beauchamp, in a calm tone.

"Yes!" replied Albert, raising his voice.

"Well," said Beauchamp, "here is my answer, my dear sir. The article was not inserted by me — I was not even aware of it; but you have by the step you have taken called my attention to the paragraph in question, and it will remain until it shall be either contradicted or confirmed by some one who has a right to do so."

"Sir," said Albert, rising, "I will do myself the honor of sending my seconds to you, and you will be kind enough to arrange with them the place of meeting and the arms which we are to use; do you understand me?"

"Certainly, my dear sir."

"And this evening, if you please, or to-morrow at the latest, we will meet."

"No! no! I will be on the ground at the proper time,

but in my opinion (and I have a right to dictate the preliminaries, as it is I who have received the provocation) — in my opinion, the time ought not to be yet. I know you to be well skilled in the management of the sword, while I am only moderately so; I know, too, that you are a good marksman — there we are about equal. I know that a duel between us two would be a serious affair, because you are brave, and I am brave also. I do not therefore wish either to kill you or to be killed myself, without a cause. Now I am going to put a question to you, and one very much to the purpose, too. Do you insist on this retraction so far as to kill me if I do not make it, although I have repeated more than once, and affirmed, on my honor, that I was ignorant of the thing with which you charge me, and although I still declare that it is impossible for any one but you to recognize the Count de Morcerf under the name of Fernand?"

"I maintain my original resolution."

"Very well, my dear sir, then I consent to cut throats with you; but I require three weeks' preparation: at the end of that time I shall come and say to you, 'The assertion is false, and I retract it;' or 'The assertion is true,' when I shall immediately draw the sword from its sheath, or the pistols from the case, whichever you please."

"Three weeks!" cried Albert; "they will pass as slowly as three centuries, when I am all the time suffering dishonor."

"Had you continued to remain on amicable terms with me, I should have said, 'Patience, my friend'; but you have constituted yourself my enemy, therefore I say, 'What does this signify to me, sir?'"

"Well, let it be three weeks, then," said Morcerf; "but remember, at the expiration of that time, no delay or subterfuge will justify you in ——"

"M. Albert de Morcerf," said Beauchamp, rising in his turn, "I cannot throw you out of the window for three weeks, that is to say, for twenty-four days to come, nor

have you any right to split my skull open till that time has elapsed. To-day is the 29th of August; the 21st of September will, therefore, be the conclusion of the term agreed on, and till that time arrives — and it is the advice of a gentleman which I am about to give you — till then we will refrain from growling and barking like two dogs chained within sight of each other.”

When he had concluded this speech, Beauchamp bowed coldly to Albert, turned his back upon him, and retired to his printing-office. Albert vented his anger on a pile of newspapers, which he sent flying all over the room by switching them violently with his stick; after which ebullition he departed, not, however, without walking several times to the door of the printing-office, as if he had half a mind to enter it. While Albert was lashing the front of his chariot in the same manner that he had done to the newspapers which were the innocent agents of his discomfiture, as he was crossing the barrier he perceived Morrel, who was walking with a quick step and a bright eye. He was passing the Chinese Baths, and appeared to have come from the direction of the Porte Saint-Martin, and to be going towards the Magdalen.

“Ah!” said Morcerf, “there goes a happy man!”

And Albert was not mistaken in his opinion.

CHAPTER LXXIX.

THE LEMONADE.

MORREL was, in fact, very happy. M. Noirtier had just sent for him, and he was in such haste to know the reason of his doing so, that he had not stopped to take a *fiacre*, placing infinitely more dependence on his own two legs than on the four legs of a cab-horse; he had, therefore, set off at a curious rate from the Rue Meslay, and was hastening with rapid strides in the direction of the Faubourg Saint Honore. Morrel advanced with a firm, manly tread, and poor Barrois followed him, as best he might; Morrel was only thirty-one, Barrois was sixty years of age; Morrel was deeply in love, and Barrois was dying with heat and exertion. These two men, thus opposed in age and interest, resembled two parts of a triangle, presenting the extremes of separation, yet, nevertheless, possessing their point of union. This point of union was Noirtier, and it was he who had just sent for Morrel with the request that he would lose no time in coming to him—a command which Morrel obeyed to the letter, to the great discomfiture of Barrois.

On arriving at the house, Morrel was not even out of breath, for love lends wings to our desires; but Barrois, who had long forgotten what it was to love, was sorely fatigued by the expedition he had been constrained to use.

The old servant introduced Morrel by a private entrance, closed the door of the study, and soon the rustling of a dress announced the arrival of Valentine. She looked marvellously beautiful in her deep mourning dress, and

Morrel experienced such intense delight in gazing upon her, that he felt as if he could almost have dispensed with the conversation of her grandfather. But the easy-chair of the old man was heard rolling along the floor, and he soon made his appearance in the room. Noirtier acknowledged by a look of extreme kindness and benevolence the thanks which Morrel lavished on him for his timely intervention on behalf of Valentine and himself — an intervention which had saved them from despair. Morrel then cast on the invalid an interrogative look as to the new favor which he desired to bestow on him. Valentine was sitting at a little distance from them, timidly awaiting the moment when she should be obliged to speak. Noirtier fixed his eyes on her.

“Am I to say what you told me?” asked Valentine.

Noirtier made a sign that she was to do so.

“M. Morrel,” said Valentine to the young man, who was regarding her with the most intense interest, “my grandfather, M. Noirtier, had a thousand things to say, which he told me three days ago; and now he has sent for you, that I may repeat them to you. I will repeat them, then, and since he has chosen me as his interpreter, I will be faithful to the trust, and will not alter a word of his intentions.”

“Oh, I am listening with the greatest impatience,” replied the young man; “speak, I beg of you.”

Valentine cast down her eyes; this was a good omen for Morrel, for he knew that nothing but happiness could have the power of thus overcoming Valentine.

“My grandfather intends leaving this house,” said she, “and Barrois is looking out suitable apartments for him in another.”

“But you, Mademoiselle de Villefort, you, who are necessary to M. Noirtier’s happiness ——”

“Me?” interrupted Valentine, “I shall not leave my grandfather — that is an understood thing between us. My apartment will be close to his. Now M. de Villefort

must either give his consent to this plan or his refusal; in the first case, I shall leave directly; and in the second, I shall await my majority, which will be completed in about ten months. Then I shall be free, and I shall have an independent fortune, and ——”

“And what?” demanded Morrel.

“And with my grandfather’s consent I shall fulfill the promise which I have made you.”

Valentine pronounced these few last words in such a low tone, that nothing but Morrel’s intense interest in what she was saying could have enabled him to hear them.

“Have I not explained your wishes, grandpapa?” said Valentine, addressing Noirtier.

“Yes,” looked the old man.

“Once under my grandfather’s roof, M. Morrel can visit me in the presence of my good and worthy protector, if we still feel that the union we contemplated will be likely to insure our future comfort and happiness; in that case I shall expect M. Morrel to come and claim me at my own hands. But, alas! I have heard it said that hearts inflamed by obstacles to their desire grow cold in time of security; I trust we shall never find it so in our experience.”

“Oh!” cried Morrel, almost tempted to throw himself on his knees before Noirtier and Valentine, and to adore them as two superior beings, “what have I ever done in my life to merit such unbounded happiness?”

“Until that time,” continued the young girl, in a calm and self-possessed tone of voice, “we will conform to circumstances, and be guided by the wishes of our friends, so long as those wishes do not tend finally to separate us; in one word, and I repeat it, because it expresses all I wish to convey — we will wait.”

“And I swear to make all the sacrifices which this word imposes, sir,” said Morrel, “not only with resignation, but with cheerfulness.”

“Therefore,” continued Valentine, looking playfully at Maximilian, “no more inconsiderate actions, no more rash

projects; for you surely would not wish to compromise the feelings of her who from this day regards herself as destined, honorably and happily, to bear your name?"

Morrel looked obedience to her commands. Noirtier regarded the lovers with a look of ineffable tenderness, while Barrois, who had remained in the room in the character of a man privileged to know everything that passed, smiled on the youthful couple as he wiped the perspiration from his bald forehead.

"How hot you look, my good Barrois!" said Valentine.

"Ah! I have been running very fast, mademoiselle, but I must do M. Morrel the justice to say that he ran still faster."

Noirtier directed their attention to a waiter on which was placed a decanter containing lemonade and a glass. The decanter was nearly full, with the exception of a little, which had been already drank by M. Noirtier.

"Come, Barrois," said the young girl, "take some of this lemonade; I see you are coveting a good draught of it."

"The fact is, mademoiselle," said Barrois, "I am dying with thirst, and since you are so kind as to offer it me, I cannot say I should at all object to drinking your health in a glass of it."

"Take some, then, and come back immediately."

Barrois took away the waiter, and hardly was he outside the door, which in his haste he forgot to shut, than they saw him throw back his head and empty to the very dregs the glass which Valentine had filled. Valentine and Morrel were exchanging their adieux in the presence of Noirtier, when a ring was heard at the door-bell. It was the signal of a visit. Valentine looked at her watch.

"It is past noon," said she, "and to-day is Saturday; I dare say it is the doctor, grandpapa."

Noirtier looked his conviction that she was right in her supposition.

"He will come in here, and M. Morrel had better go; do you not think so, grandpapa?"

"Yes," signed the old man.

"Barrois!" cried Valentine; "Barrois!"

"I am coming, mademoiselle," replied he.

"Barrois will open the door for you," said Valentine, addressing Morrel. "And now remember one thing, Mr. Officer — that my grandfather commands you not to take any rash or ill-advised step which would be likely to compromise our happiness."

"I promised him to wait," replied Morrel, "and I will wait."

At this moment Barrois entered.

"Who rang?" asked Valentine.

"Doctor d'Avrigny," said Barrois, staggering as if he would fall.

"What is the matter, Barrois?" said Valentine.

The old man did not answer, but looked at his master with wild staring eyes, while with his cramped hand he grasped a piece of furniture to enable him to stand upright.

"He is going to fall!" cried Morrel.

The trembling which had attacked Barrois gradually increased, the features of the face became quite altered, and the convulsive movement of the muscles appeared to indicate the approach of a most serious nervous disorder. Noirtier, seeing Barrois in this pitiable condition, showed by his looks all the various emotions of sorrow and sympathy which can animate the heart of man. Barrois made some steps towards his master.

"Ah, sir!" said he, "tell me what is the matter with me? I am suffering — I cannot see. A thousand fiery darts are piercing my brain. Ah! don't touch me, pray don't."

By this time, his haggard eyes had the appearance of being ready to start from their sockets; his head fell back, and the lower extremities of the body began to stiffen.

Valentine uttered a cry of horror; Morrel took her in his arms, as if to defend her from some unknown danger.

"M. d'Avrigny! M. d'Avrigny!" cried she, in a stifled voice. "Help! help!"

Barrois turned around, and with a great effort, stumbled a few steps, then fell at the feet of Noirtier, and resting his hand on the knee of the invalid, exclaimed, "My master! my good master!"

At this moment M. de Villefort, attracted by the noise, appeared on the threshold. Morrel relaxed his hold of Valentine, and retreating to a distant corner of the room, he remained half hidden behind a curtain. Pale as if he had been gazing on a serpent, he fixed his terrified eye on the agonized sufferer.

Noirtier, burning with impatience and terror, was in despair at his utter inability to help his old domestic, whom he regarded more in the light of a friend than a servant. One might trace the terrible conflict which was going on between the living energetic mind and the inanimate and helpless body, by the fearful swelling of the veins of his forehead and the contraction of the muscles around the eye. Barrois, his features convulsed, his eyes suffused with blood, and his head thrown back, was lying at full length, beating the floor with his hands, while his legs were become so stiff that they looked as if they would break rather than bend. A slight appearance of foam was visible around the mouth, and he breathed painfully and with extreme difficulty.

Villefort seemed stupefied with astonishment, and remained gazing intently on the scene before him, without uttering a word. He had not seen Morrel. After a moment of dull contemplation, during which his face became pale, and his hair seemed to stand on end, he sprang towards the door, crying out:

"Doctor! doctor! come instantly, pray come!"

"Madame! madame!" cried Valentine, calling her step-mother, and running upstairs to meet her; "come quick, quick! and bring your bottle of smelling-salts with you."

"What is the matter?" said Madame de Villefort, in a harsh and constrained tone.

"Oh, come! come!"

"But where is the doctor?" exclaimed Villefort; "where is he?"

Madame de Villefort now deliberately descended the stairs. In one hand she held her handkerchief, with which she appeared to be wiping her face, and in the other a bottle of English smelling-salts. Her first look on entering the room was at Noirtier, whose face, independent of the emotion which such a scene could not fail of producing, proclaimed him to be in possession of his usual health; her second glance was at the dying man. She turned pale, and her eye passed quickly from the servant and rested on the master.

"In the name of Heaven, madame!" said Villefort, "where is the doctor? — he was with you just now. You see this is a fit of apoplexy, and he might be saved if he could but be bled!"

"Has he eaten anything lately?" asked Madame de Villefort, eluding her husband's question.

"Madame," replied Valentine, "he has not even breakfasted. He has been running very fast on an errand with which my grandfather charged him, and when he returned he took nothing but a glass of lemonade."

"Ah!" said Madame de Villefort; "why did he not take wine? Lemonade was a very bad thing for him."

"Grandpapa's bottle of lemonade was standing just by his side; poor Barrois was very thirsty, and was thankful to drink anything he could find."

Madame de Villefort started. Noirtier looked at her with a glance of the most profound scrutiny.

"He has such a short neck," said she.

"Madame," said De Villefort, "I ask where is M. d'Avrigny? In God's name answer me!"

"He is with Edward, who is not quite well," replied

Madame de Villefort, no longer being able to avoid answering.

Villefort rushed upstairs to fetch him himself.

"Take this," said Madame de Villefort, giving her smelling-bottle to Valentine. "They will, no doubt, bleed him, therefore I will retire, for I cannot endure the sight of blood;" and she followed her husband upstairs.

Morrel now emerged from his hiding-place, where he had remained quite unperceived, so great had been the general confusion.

"Go away as quickly as you can, Maximilian," said Valentine, "and stay till I send for you. Go."

Morrel looked towards Noirtier for permission to retire. The old man, who had preserved all his usual *sang froid*, made a sign for him to do so. The young man pressed Valentine's hand to his lips, and then left the house by a back staircase. At the same moment that he quitted the room, Villefort and the doctor entered by an opposite entrance. Barrois was now showing signs of returning consciousness—the crisis seemed past; a low moaning was heard, and he raised himself on one knee. D'Avrigny and Villefort laid him on a couch.

"What do you prescribe, doctor?" demanded Villefort.

"Give me some water and ether; you have some in the house, have you not?"

"Yes."

"Send for some oil of turpentine and tartar emetic."

Villefort immediately dispatched a messenger.

"And now let every one retire."

"Must I go, too?" asked Valentine, timidly.

"Yes, mademoiselle, you especially," replied the doctor abruptly.

Valentine looked at M. d'Avrigny with astonishment, kissed her grandfather on the forehead, and left the room. The doctor closed the door after her with a gloomy air.

"Look, look, doctor!" said Villefort; "he is quite com-

ing around again; I really do not think, after all, that it is anything of consequence."

M. d'Avrigny answered by a melancholy smile.

"How do you feel yourself, Barrois?" asked he.

"A little better, sir."

"Will you drink some of this ether and water?"

"I will try; but don't touch me."

"Why not?"

"Because I feel that if you were only to touch me with the tip of your finger, the fit would return."

"Drink."

Barrois took the glass, and, raising it to his purple lips, took about half of the liquid offered him.

"Where do you suffer?" asked the doctor.

"Everywhere; I feel cramp over my whole body."

"Do you find any dazzling sensation before the eyes?"

"Yes."

"Any noise in the ears?"

"Frightful."

"When did you first feel that?"

"Just now."

"Suddenly?"

"Yes, like a clap of thunder."

"Did you feel nothing of it yesterday or the day before?"

"Nothing."

"No drowsiness?"

"None."

"What have you eaten to-day?"

"I have eaten nothing; I only drank a glass of my master's lemonade—that's all;" and Barrois turned towards Noirtier, who, immovably fixed in his armchair, was contemplating this terrible scene without allowing a word or a movement to escape him.

"Where is the lemonade?" asked the doctor, eagerly.

"Downstairs, in the decanter."

"Whereabouts downstairs?"

"In the kitchen."

"Shall I go and fetch it, doctor?" inquired Villefort.

"No, stay here and try to make Barrois drink the rest of this glass of ether and water. I will go myself and fetch the lemonade."

D'Avrigny bounded towards the door, flew down the back staircase, and almost knocked down Madame de Villefort in his haste, who was herself going down to the kitchen. D'Avrigny paid no attention to her; possessed with but one idea, he cleared the last four steps with a bound, and rushed into the kitchen, where he saw the decanter, about three parts empty, still standing on the waiter, where it had been left. He darted upon it as an eagle would seize upon its prey. Panting with loss of breath, he returned to the room he had just left. Madame de Villefort was slowly ascending the steps which led to her room.

"Is this the decanter you spoke of?" asked D'Avrigny.

"Yes, doctor."

"Is it the same lemonade of which you partook?"

"I believe so."

"What did it taste like?"

"It had a bitter taste."

The doctor poured some drops of the lemonade into the palm of his hand, put his lips to it, and after having rinsed his mouth as a man does when he is tasting wine, he spat the liquor into the fireplace.

"It is no doubt the same," said he. "Did you drink some, too, M. Noirtier?"

"Yes."

"And did you also discover a bitter taste?"

"Yes."

"Oh, doctor!" cried Barrois, "the fit is coming on again. Oh, have pity on me!"

The doctor flew to his patient.

"That emetic, Villefort — see if it is coming!"

Villefort sprung into the passage, exclaiming:

"The emetic! the emetic! — is it come yet?"

No one answered. The most profound terror reigned throughout the house.

"If I had anything by means of which I could inflate the lungs," said D'Avrigny, looking around him, "perhaps I might prevent suffocation. But there is nothing which could do — nothing."

"Oh, sir!" cried Barrois, "are you going to let me die without help? Oh, I am dying! Oh, save me!"

"A pen! a pen!" said the doctor.

There was one lying on the table; he endeavored to introduce it into the mouth of the patient, who, in the midst of his convulsions, was making vain attempts to vomit; but the jaws were so clinched that the pen could not pass them. This second attack was much more violent than the first, and he had slipped from the couch to the ground, where he was writhing in agony.

The doctor left him in this paroxysm, knowing that he could do nothing to alleviate it, and going up to Noirtier, said, abruptly:

"How do you find yourself? — well?"

"Yes."

"Have you any weight on the chest? or does your stomach feel light and comfortable — eh?"

"Yes."

"Then you feel pretty much as you generally do after you have had the dose which I am accustomed to give you every Sunday?"

"Yes."

"Did Barrois make your lemonade?"

"Yes."

"Was it you who asked him to drink some of it?"

"No."

"Was it M. de Villefort?"

"No."

"Madame?"

"No."

"It was your granddaughter, then, was it not?"

"Yes."

A groan from Barrois, accompanied by a yawn which seemed to crack the very jaw-bones, attracted the attention of M. d'Avrigny; he left M. Noirtier and returned to the sick man.

"Barrois," said the doctor, "can you speak?"

Barrois muttered a few unintelligible words.

"Try and make an effort to do so, my good man," said D'Avrigny.

Barrois reopened his bloodshot eyes.

"Who made the lemonade?"

"I did."

"Did you bring it to your master directly it was made?"

"No."

"You left it somewhere, then, in the meantime?"

"Yes; I left it in the pantry because I was called away."

"Who brought it into this room, then?"

"Mademoiselle Valentine."

D'Avrigny struck his forehead with his hand.

"Gracious Heaven!" exclaimed he.

"Doctor! doctor!" cried Barrois, who felt another fit coming on.

"Will they never bring that emetic?" asked the doctor.

"Here is a glass with one already prepared," said Villefort, entering the room.

"Who prepared it?"

"The chemist who came here with me."

"Drink it," said the doctor to Barrois.

"Impossible, doctor, it is too late; my throat is closing up. I am choking! Oh, my heart! Oh! my head — Oh! — what agony! — Shall I suffer like this long?"

"No, no, friend," replied the doctor; "you will soon cease to suffer."

"Ah! I understand you," said the unhappy man. "My God, have mercy upon me!" and, uttering a fearful

cry, Barrois fell back as if he had been struck by lightning.

D'Avrigny put his hand to his heart, and placed a glass before his lips.

"Well?" said Villefort.

"Go to the kitchen and get me some syrup of violets."

Villefort went immediately.

"Do not be alarmed, M. Noirtier," said D'Avrigny, "I am going to take my patient into the next room to bleed him; this sort of attack is very frightful to witness."

And taking Barrois under the arms, he dragged him into an adjoining room; but almost immediately he returned to fetch the remainder of the lemonade.

Noirtier closed his right eye.

"You want Valentine, do you not? I will tell them to send her to you."

Villefort returned, and D'Avrigny met him in the passage.

"Well, how is he now?" asked he.

"Come in here," said D'Avrigny; and he took him into the chamber where the sick man lay.

"Is he still in a fit?" asked the procureur du roi.

"He is dead."

Villefort drew back a few steps, and clasping his hands, exclaimed, with real amazement and sympathy:

"Dead! and so soon, too!"

"Yes, it is very soon," said the doctor, looking at the corpse before him; "but that ought not to astonish you; Monsieur and Madame de Saint-Meran died as soon. People die very suddenly in your house, M. de Villefort."

"What!" cried the magistrate, with an accent of horror and consternation, "are you still harping on that terrible idea?"

"Still, sir; and I shall always do so," replied D'Avrigny; "for it has never for one instant ceased to retain possession of my mind; and that you may be quite sure I am not mistaken this time, listen well to what I am going to say, M. Villefort."

The magistrate trembled convulsively.

"There is a poison which destroys life almost without leaving any perceptible traces. I know it well; I have studied it in all its qualities and in the effects which it produces. I recognized the presence of this poison in the case of poor Barrois as well as in that of Madame de Saint-Meran. There is a way of detecting its presence. It restores the blue color of litmus-paper reddened by an acid, and it turns syrup of violets green. We have no litmus-paper, but, hark! here they come with the syrup of violets."

The doctor was right; steps were heard in the passage. M. d'Avrigny opened the door, and took from the hands of the femme de chambre a cup which contained two or three spoonfuls of the syrup; he then carefully closed the door.

"Look!" said he to the procureur du roi, whose heart beat so loudly that it might almost be heard; "here is, in this cup, some syrup of violets, and this decanter contains the remainder of the lemonade of which M. Noirtier and Barrois partook. If the lemonade be pure and inoffensive, the syrup will retain its color; if, on the contrary, the lemonade be drugged with poison, the syrup will become green. Look well at it!"

The doctor then slowly poured some drops of the lemonade from the decanter into the cup, and in an instant a kind of light cloudy sediment began to form at the bottom of the cup; this sediment first took a blue shade, then from the color of sapphire it passed to that of opal, and from opal to emerald. Arrived at this last hue, it changed no more. The result of the experiment left no doubt whatever on the mind.

"The unfortunate Barrois has been poisoned," said D'Avrigny; "and I will maintain this assertion before God and man!"

Villefort said nothing, but he clasped his hands, opened his haggard eyes, and, overcome with his emotion, sank into a chair.

CHAPTER LXXX.

THE ACCUSATION.

M. D'AVRIGNY soon restored the magistrate to consciousness, who had looked like a second corpse in that chamber of death.

"Oh! death is in my house!" cried Villefort.

"Say, rather, crime!" replied the doctor.

"M. d'Avrigny," cried Villefort, "I cannot tell you all I feel at this moment — terror, grief, madness!"

"Yes," said M. d'Avrigny, with an imposing calmness, "but I think it is now time to act. I think it is time to stop this torrent of mortality. I can no longer bear to be in possession of these secrets without the hope of seeing the victims and society generally revenged."

Villefort cast a gloomy look around him.

"In my house!" murmured he; "in my house!"

"Come, magistrate," said M. d'Avrigny; "show yourself a man; as an interpreter of the law, do honor to your profession by sacrificing your selfish interests to it."

"You make me shudder, doctor! Do you talk of a sacrifice?"

"I do."

"Do you, then, suspect any one?"

"I suspect no one; death raps at your door — it enters; it goes, not blindfolded, but circumspectly, from room to room. Well, it follows its course; I track its passage; I adopt the wisdom of the ancients, and feel my way, for my friendship for your family and my respect for you are as a twofold bandage over my eyes; well ——"

"Oh! speak, speak, doctor; I shall have courage."

"Well, sir, you have in your establishment, or in your family, perhaps, one of those frightful phenomena of which each century produces only one. Locuste and Agrippina, living at the same time, are an exception, and prove the determination of Providence to effect the entire ruin of the Roman empire, sullied by so many crimes. Brunehaut and Fredegonde are the results of the painful struggle of civilization in its infancy, when man was learning to control mind, were it even by an emissary from the realms of darkness. All these women had been, or were, beautiful. The same flower of innocence had flourished, or was still flourishing, on their brow, that is seen on the brow of the culprit in your house."

Villefort shrieked, clasped his hands, and looked at the doctor with a supplicating air. But the latter went on without pity:

"‘Seek whom the crime would profit,’ says an axiom of jurisprudence."

"Doctor," cried Villefort, "alas! doctor, how often has man's justice been deceived by those fatal words! I know not why, but I feel that this crime——"

"You acknowledge, then, the existence of the crime?"

"Yes; I see too plainly that it does exist. But it seems that it is intended to affect me personally. I fear an attack myself, after all these disasters."

"Oh, man!" murmured D'Avrigny, "the most selfish of all animals—the most personal of all creatures, who believes the earth turns, the sun shines, and death strikes for him alone—an ant cursing God from the top of a blade of grass! And have those who have lost their lives lost nothing? M. de Saint-Meran, Madame de Saint-Meran, M. Noirtier——"

"How! M. Noirtier?"

"Yes; think you it was the poor servant's life was coveted? No, no; like Shakespeare's Polonius, he died for another. It was Noirtier the lemonade was intended for—it is Noirtier, logically speaking, who drank it; the

other drank it only by accident; and although Barrois is dead, it was Noirtier whose death was wished for."

"But why did it not kill my father?"

"I told you one evening in the garden, after Madame de Saint-Meran's death, because his system is accustomed to that very poison, and the dose was trifling for him which would be fatal for another; because no one knows, not even the assassin, that for the last twelve months I have given M. Noirtier brucine for his paralytic affection; while the assassin is not ignorant, for he has proved it, that brucine is a violent poison."

"Pity, pity!" murmured Villefort, wringing his hands.

"Follow the culprit's steps; he first kills M. de Saint-Meran ——"

"Oh, doctor!"

"I would swear to it; what I heard of his symptoms agrees too well with what I have seen in the other cases."

Villefort ceased to contend; he only groaned.

"He first kills M. de Saint-Meran," repeated the doctor, "then Madame de Saint-Meran—a double fortune to inherit."

Villefort wiped the perspiration from his forehead.

"Listen attentively."

"Alas!" stammered Villefort, "I do not lose a single word."

"M. Noirtier," resumed M. d'Avrigny, in the same pitiless tone—"M. Noirtier had once made his will against you—against your family—in favor of the poor, in fact; M. Noirtier is spared, because nothing is expected from him. But he has no sooner destroyed the first will and made a second, than, for fear he should make a third, he is struck down: the will was made the day before yesterday, I believe; you see there has been no time lost."

"Oh, mercy, M. d'Avrigny!"

"No mercy, sir! The physician has a sacred mission on earth; and to fulfill it he begins at the source of life and goes down to the mysterious darkness of the tomb.

When crime has been committed, and God, doubtless in anger, turns away his face, it is for the physician to bring the culprit to justice."

"Have mercy on my child, sir!" murmured Villefort.

"You see it is yourself who have first named her — you, her father."

"Have pity on Valentine! Listen! it is impossible! I would as willingly accuse myself! Valentine, whose heart is pure as a diamond or a lily."

"No pity, M. le procureur du roi; the crime is flagrant. Mademoiselle herself packed all the medicines which were sent to M. de Saint-Meran, and M. de Saint-Meran is dead. Mademoiselle de Villefort prepared all the cooling draughts which Madame de Saint-Meran took, and Madame de Saint-Meran is dead. Mademoiselle de Villefort took from the hands of Barrois, who was sent out, the lemonade which M. Noirtier has every morning, and he has escaped only by a miracle. Mademoiselle de Villefort is the culprit! She is the poisoner! M. le procureur du roi, I denounce Mademoiselle de Villefort; do your duty."

"Doctor, I resist no longer; I can no longer defend myself; I believe you; but for pity's sake, spare my life, my honor!"

"M. de Villefort," replied the doctor, with increased vehemence, "there are occasions when I dispense with all foolish human circumspection. If your daughter had committed only one crime, and I saw her meditating another, I would say, 'Warn her, punish her, let her pass the remainder of her life in a convent weeping and praying.' If she had committed two crimes, I would say, 'Here, M. de Villefort, is a poison that the poisoner is not acquainted with, one that has no known antidote, quick as thought, rapid as lightning, mortal as the thunderbolt; give her that poison, recommending her soul to God, and save your honor and your life, for it is yours she aims at; and I can picture her approaching your pillow with her hypocritical smiles and her sweet exhortations. Woe to you, M. de

Villefort, if you do not strike first!’ This is what I would say had she only killed two persons; but she has seen three deaths — has contemplated three murdered persons — has knelt by three corpses! To the scaffold with the poisoner! — to the scaffold! Do you talk of your honor? Do what I tell you, and immortality awaits you!”

Villefort fell on his knees.

“Listen,” said he; “I have not the strength of mind you have, or rather that which you would not have, if, instead of my daughter Valentine, your daughter Madeleine were concerned.”

The doctor turned pale.

“Doctor, every son of woman is born to suffer and to die; I am content to suffer and to await death.”

“Beware,” said Dr. d’Avrigny; “it may come slowly; you will see it approach, after having struck your father, your wife, perhaps your son.”

Villefort, suffocating, pressed the doctor’s arm.

“Listen!” cried he; “pity me, — help me! No, my daughter is not guilty. If you drag us both before a tribunal I will still say, ‘No, my daughter is not guilty; — there is no crime in my house. I will not acknowledge a crime in my house; for when crime enters a dwelling, it is like death: it does not come alone.’ Listen! What does it signify to you if I am murdered? Are you my friend? Are you a man? Have you a heart? No, you are a physician! Well, I tell you I will not drag my daughter before a tribunal and give her up to the executioner! The bare idea would kill me — would drive me like a madman to dig my heart out with my finger-nails! And if you are mistaken, doctor! — if it were not my daughter! — if I should come one day, pale as a spectre, and say to you, ‘Assassin! you have killed my child!’ Hold! if that should happen, although I am a Christian, M. d’Avrigny, I should kill myself.”

“Well,” said the doctor, after a moment’s silence, “I will wait.”

Villefort looked at him as if he had doubted his words.

"Only," continued M. d'Avrigny, with a slow and solemn tone, "if any one falls ill in your house, if you feel yourself attacked, do not send for me, for I will come no more. I will consent to share this dreadful secret with you; but I will not allow shame and remorse to grow and increase in my conscience, as crime and misery will in your house."

"Then you abandon me, doctor?"

"Yes, for I can follow you no further; and I only stop at the foot of the scaffold. Some further discovery will be made, which will bring this dreadful tragedy to a close. Adieu!"

"I entreat you, doctor!"

"All the horrors that disturb my thoughts make your house odious and fatal. Adieu, sir!"

"One word — one single word more, doctor! You go, leaving me in all the horror of my situation, after increasing it by what you have revealed to me. But what will be reported of the sudden death of this poor old servant?"

"True," said M. d'Avrigny; "we will return."

The doctor went out first, followed by M. de Villefort; the terrified servants were on the stairs and in the passage where the doctor would pass.

"Sir," said D'Avrigny to Villefort, so loud that all might hear, "poor Barrois had led too sedentary a life of late; accustomed formerly to ride on horseback, or in a carriage, to the four corners of Europe, the monotonous walk around that armchair has killed him: his blood has thickened; he was stout, had a short, thick neck; he was attacked with apoplexy, and I was called in too late. *Apropos*," added he, in a low tone, "take care to throw away that cup of syrup of violets in the ashes."

The doctor, without shaking hands with Villefort, without adding a word to what he had said, went out amid the tears and lamentations of the whole household.

The same evening all Villefort's servants, who had assembled in the kitchen and had a long consultation, came to tell Madame Villefort they wished to leave. No entreaty, no proposition of increased wages, could induce them to remain; to every argument they replied, "We must go, for death is in this house." They all left in spite of prayers and entreaties, testifying their regret at leaving so good a master and mistress, and especially Mademoiselle Valentine, so good, so kind, and so gentle.

Villefort looked at Valentine as they said this. She was in tears; and, strange as it was, in spite of the emotions he felt at the sight of these tears, he looked also at Madame de Villefort, and it appeared to him as if a slight gloomy smile had passed over her thin lips, like those meteors which are seen passing inauspiciously between two clouds in a stormy sky.

CHAPTER LXXXI.

THE ROOM OF THE RETIRED BAKER.

THE evening of the day on which the Count de Morcerf had left Danglars's house with feelings of shame and anger, caused by the banker's declining the projected alliance between their two families, M. Andrea Cavalcanti, with curled hair, moustaches in perfect order, and white gloves which fitted admirably, had entered the courtyard of the banker's house in La Chaussée d'Antin. He had not been more than ten minutes in the drawing-room before he drew Danglars aside into the recess of a bow-window, and, after an ingenious preamble, related to him all his anxieties and cares since his noble father's departure. He acknowledged the extreme kindness which had been shown him by the banker's family, in which he had been received as a son, and where, besides, his warmest affections had found an object on which to centre in Mademoiselle Danglars.

Danglars listened with the most profound attention; he had expected this declaration the last two or three days; and when at last it came, his eyes glistened as much as they had lowered on listening to Morcerf. He would not, however, yield immediately to the young man's request, but made a few conscientious scruples.

"Are you not rather young, M. Andrea, to think of marrying?"

"I think not, sir," replied M. Cavalcanti; "in Italy the nobility generally marry young; life is so uncertain, we ought to secure happiness while it is within our reach."

"Well, sir," said Danglars, "in case your proposals,

which do me honor, are accepted by my wife and daughter, by whom shall the preliminary arrangements be settled? So important a negotiation should, I think, be conducted by the respective fathers of the young people."

"Sir, my father is a man of great foresight and prudence. Imagining I might wish to settle in France, he left me at his departure, together with the papers constituting my identity, a letter promising, if he approved of my choice, 150,000 livres per annum from the day I was married. So far as I can judge, I suppose this to be a quarter of my father's revenue."

"I," said Danglars, "have always intended giving my daughter 500,000 francs as her dowry; she is, besides, my sole heiress."

"All would then be easily arranged if the baroness and her daughter are willing. We should command an annuity of 175,000 livres. Supposing, also, I should persuade the marquis to give me my capital, which is not likely, but still is possible, we should place these two or three millions in your hands, whose talent might make it realize ten per cent."

"I never give more than four per cent., and generally only three and a half; to my son-in-law I would give five, and we would share the profit."

"Very good, father-in-law," said Cavalcanti, yielding to his low-born nature, which would escape sometimes through the aristocratic gloss with which he sought to conceal it.

Correcting himself immediately, he said, "Excuse me, sir; hope alone makes me almost mad — what will not reality do?"

"But," said Danglars, who on his part did not perceive how soon the conversation, which was at first disinterested, was turning to a business transaction, "there is, doubtless, a part of your fortune your father could not refuse you?"

"Which?" asked the young man.

"That you inherit from your mother."

"Truly, from my mother, Leonora Corsinari."

"How much may it amount to?"

"Indeed, sir," said Andrea, "I assure you I have never given the subject a thought; but I suppose it must have been at least two millions."

Danglars felt as much overcome with joy as the miser who finds a lost treasure, or as the shipwrecked mariner who feels himself on the solid ground instead of in the abyss which he expected would swallow him up.

"Well, sir," said Andrea, bowing to the banker respectfully, "may I hope?"

"You may not only hope," said Danglars, "but consider it a settled thing, if no obstacle arises on your part."

"I am indeed rejoiced," said Andrea.

"But," said Danglars, thoughtfully, "how is it that your patron, M. de Monte-Cristo, did not make this proposal for you?"

Andrea blushed imperceptibly.

"I have just left the count, sir," said he; "he is doubtless a delightful man, but inconceivably singular in his ideas: he esteems me highly; he even told me he had not the slightest doubt that my father would give me the capital instead of the interest of my property; he has promised to use his influence to obtain it for me: but he also declared that he never had taken on himself the responsibility of making proposals for another, and he never would. I must, however, do him the justice to add, that he assured me if ever he had regretted the repugnance he felt to such a step, it was on this occasion, because he thought the projected union would be a happy and suitable one. Besides, if he will do nothing officially, he will answer any questions you propose to him. And now," continued he, with one of his most charming smiles, "having finished talking to the father-in-law, I must address myself to the banker."

"And what may you have to say to him?" said Danglars, laughing in his turn.

"That the day after to-morrow I shall have to draw upon you for about four thousand francs; but the count, expecting my bachelor's revenue could not suffice for the coming month's outlay, has offered me a draft for twenty thousand francs. It bears his signature, as you see, which is all-sufficient."

"Bring me a million such as that," said Danglars, "I shall be well pleased," putting the draft in his pocket. "Fix your own hour for to-morrow, and my cashier shall call on you with a check for eighty thousand francs."

"At ten o'clock, then, if you please: I should like it early, as I am going into the country to-morrow."

"Very well, at ten o'clock; you are still at the Hôtel des Princes?"

"Yes."

The following morning, with the banker's usual punctuality, the eighty thousand francs were placed in the young man's hands, as he was on the point of starting, having left two hundred francs for Caderousse. He went out chiefly to avoid this dangerous enemy, and returned as late as possible in the evening. But scarcely had he stepped out of his carriage, when the porter met him with a parcel in his hand.

"Sir," said he, "the man has been here."

"What man?" said Andrea, carelessly, apparently forgetting him whom he but too well recollected.

"Him to whom your excellency pays that little annuity."

"Oh!" said Andrea, "my father's old servant. Well, you gave him the two hundred francs I had left for him?"

"Yes, your excellency."

Andrea had expressed a wish to be thus addressed.

"But," continued the porter, "he would not take them."

Andrea turned pale; but as it was dark, no one noticed his paleness.

"What! he would not take them?" said he, with slight emotion.

"No; he wished to speak to your excellency; I told him you were gone out, which, after some dispute, he believed, and gave me this letter, which he had brought with him already sealed."

"Give it me," said Andrea, and he read by the light of his carriage-lamp:

"You know where I live; I expect you to-morrow morning at nine o'clock."

Andrea examined it carefully, to ascertain whether the letter had been opened, or any indiscreet eyes had seen its contents, but it was so carefully folded, no one could have read it, and the seal was perfect.

"Very well," said he. "Poor man! he is a worthy creature."

He left the porter to ponder on these words, not knowing which most to admire, the master or the servant.

"Take out the horses quickly, and come up to me," said Andrea to his groom.

In two seconds the young man had reached his room and burned Caderousse's letter. The servant entered just as he had finished.

"You are about my height, Peter," said he.

"I have that honor, your excellency."

"You had a new livery yesterday?"

"Yes, sir."

"I have an engagement with a pretty little girl for this evening, and do not wish to be known; lend me your livery till to-morrow; I may sleep, perhaps, at an inn."

Peter obeyed. Five minutes after, Andrea left the hotel, completely disguised, took a cabriolet, and ordered the driver to take him to the Cheval Rouge at Picpus.

The next morning he left that inn, as he had left the Hôtel des Princes, without being noticed, walked down the Faubourg St. Antoine, along the Boulevard to Rue Menilmontant, and, stopping at the door of the third house on the left, looked for some one of whom to make inquiry in the porter's absence.

"Whom are you looking for, my fine fellow?" asked the fruiteress on the opposite side.

"M. Palletin, if you please, my good woman," replied Andrea.

"A retired baker?" asked the fruiteress.

"Exactly."

"He lives at the end of the yard, on the left, on the third story."

Andrea went as she directed him, and on the third floor he found a hare's paw, which, by the hasty ringing of the bell, it was evident he pulled with considerable ill-temper. A moment after, Caderousse's face appeared at the grating in the door.

"Ah! you are punctual," said he, as he unbolted the door.

"Confound you and your punctuality!" said Andrea, throwing himself into a chair in a manner that implied that he would rather have flung it at the head of his host.

"Come, come, my little fellow, don't be angry. See, I have thought about you—look at the good breakfast we are going to have; nothing but what you are fond of."

Andrea, indeed, inhaled the scent of something cooking, which was not unwelcome to him, hungry as he was; it was that mixture of fat and garlic peculiar to provincial kitchens of inferior order, added to that of dried fish, and above all the pungent smell of musk and cloves. These odors escaped from two deep dishes, which were covered and placed on a stove, and from a copper pan placed in an old iron pot.

In an adjoining room, Andrea saw also a tolerably clean table prepared for two, two bottles of wine, sealed, the one with green, the other with yellow, a considerable portion of brandy in a decanter, and a measure of fruit in a cabbage-leaf, cleverly arranged on an earthenware plate.

"What do you think of it, my little fellow?" said Caderousse; "ay! that smells good! you know I used to be a good cook; do you recollect how you used to lick your fingers? You were among the first who tasted any of my dishes, and I think you relish them tolerably."

While speaking, Caderousse went on peeling a fresh supply of onions.

"But," said Andrea, ill-temperedly, "*pardieu!* if it was only to breakfast with you that you disturbed me, I wish the devil had taken you!"

"My boy," said Caderousse, sententiously, "one can talk while eating. And then, you ungrateful being! are you not pleased to see an old friend? I am weeping with joy."

He was truly crying, but it would have been difficult to say whether joy or the onions produced the greatest effect on the lachrymal gland of the old inn-keeper of the Pont du Gard.

"Hold your tongue, hypocrite!" said Andrea; "you love me!"

"Yes, I do, or may the devil take me. I know it is a weakness," said Caderousse, "but it overpowers me."

"And yet it has not prevented your sending for me to play me some trick."

"Come!" said Caderousse, wiping his large knife on his apron, "if I did not like you, do you think I should endure the wretched life you lead me? Think for a moment: you have your servant's clothes on — you therefore keep a servant; I have none, and am obliged to cook my own meals; you abuse my cookery because you dine at the table d'hôte of the Hôtel des Princes, or the Café de Paris.

Well, I, too, could keep a servant; I, too, could have a tilbury; I, too, could dine where I like; but why do I not? Because I would not annoy my little Benedetto. Come! just acknowledge that I could — eh?"

This address was accompanied by a look which it was by no means difficult to understand.

"Well," said Andrea, "admitting your love, why do you want me to breakfast with you?"

"That I may have the pleasure of seeing you, my little fellow."

"What is the use of seeing me after we have made our arrangements?"

"Eh! dear friend," said Caderousse, "are wills ever made without codicils? But you first came to breakfast, did you not? Well! sit down, and let us begin with these pilchards, and this fresh butter, which I have put on some vine-leaves to please you, wicked one. Ah! yes; you look at my room, my four straw chairs, my images, three francs each. But what do you expect? This is not the Hôtel des Princes."

"Come! you are growing discontented, you are no longer happy; you who only wish to appear a retired baker."

Caderousse sighed.

"Well, what have you to say? you have seen your dream realized."

"I can still say, it is a dream; a retired baker, my poor Benedetto, is rich — he has an annuity."

"Well, you have an annuity."

"I have?"

"Yes, since I bring you your two hundred francs."

Caderousse shrugged up his shoulders.

"It is humiliating," said he, "thus to receive money given grudgingly; an uncertain supply which may soon fail. You see I am obliged to economize, in case your prosperity should cease. Well, my friend, fortune is inconstant, as said the chaplain of ——— regiment. I

know your prosperity is great, rascal; you are to marry the daughter of Danglars."

"What! of Danglars?"

"Yes, to be sure! must I say Baron Danglars? I might as well say Count Benedetto. He was an old friend of mine, and if he had not so bad a memory, he ought to invite me to your wedding, seeing he came to mine. Yes, yes, to mine; forsooth! he was not so proud then; he was an under-clerk to the good M. Morrel. I have dined many times with him and the Count de Morcerf; so you see I have some high connections, and were I to cultivate them a little, we might meet in the same drawing-rooms."

"Come, your jealousy represents everything to you in the wrong light."

"That is all very fine, my Benedetto, but I know what I am saying. Perhaps I may one day put on my best coat, and presenting myself at the great gate, introduce myself. Meanwhile let us sit down and eat."

Caderousse set the example, and attacked the breakfast with good appetite, praising each dish he set before his visitor. The latter seemed to have resigned himself; he drew the corks, and partook largely of the fish with the garlic and fat.

"Ah! compeer," said Caderousse, "you are getting on better terms with your old landlord!"

"Faith, yes," replied Andrea, whose hunger prevailed over every other feeling.

"So you like it, you rogue?"

"So much that I wonder how a man who can cook thus can complain of hard living."

"Do you see," said Caderousse, "all my happiness is marred by one thought?"

"What is that?"

"That I am dependent on another, I who have always gained my own livelihood honestly."

"Do not let that disturb you — I have enough for two."

"No, truly; you may believe me if you will; at the end of every month I am tormented by remorse."

"Good Caderousse!"

"So much so, that yesterday I would not take the two hundred francs."

"Yes, you wished to speak to me; but was it, indeed, remorse, tell me?"

"True remorse; and, besides, an idea had struck me."

Andrea shuddered; he always did so at Caderousse's ideas.

"It is miserable — do you see? — always to wait till the end of the month."

"Oh!" said Andrea, philosophically, determined to watch his companion narrowly, "does not life pass in waiting? Do I, for instance, fare better? Well, I wait patiently, do I not?"

"Yes, because, instead of expecting two hundred wretched francs, you expect five or six thousand, perhaps ten, perhaps even twelve, for you take care not to let any one know the utmost; down there, you always had little presents, and Christmas-boxes, you tried to hide from your poor friend Caderousse. Fortunately he is a cunning fellow, that friend Caderousse."

"There you are beginning again to ramble — to talk again and again of the past! But what is the use of teasing me with so much repetition?"

"Ah! you are only one and twenty, and can forget the past; I am fifty, and am obliged to recollect it. But let us return to business."

"Yes."

"I was going to say, if I were in your place ——"

"Well?"

"I would realize ——"

"How would you realize?"

"I would ask for six months' advance, under pretence of being able to purchase a farm, then with my six months' I would decamp."

"Well, well," said Andrea, "that is no bad thought!"

"My dear friend," said Caderousse, "eat of my bread, and take my advice, you will be none the worse off, physically or morally."

"But," said Andrea, "why do you not act on the advice you give me? Why do you not realize a six months', a year's advance even, and retire to Brussels? Instead of living the retired baker, you might live as a bankrupt, using his privileges; that would be very good."

"How the devil would you have me retire on twelve hundred francs?"

"Ah! Caderousse," said Andrea, "how covetous you are! Two months since you were dying with hunger."

"In eating, the appetite grows," said Caderousse, grinning, and showing his teeth like a monkey laughing or a tiger growling. "And," added he, biting off, with those large, white teeth, an enormous mouthful of bread, "I have formed a plan."

Caderousse's plans alarmed Andrea still more than his ideas; ideas were but the germ, the plan was reality.

"Let me see your plan; I dare say it is a pretty one."

"Why not? Who formed the plan by which we left the establishment of M——! eh? Was it not I? And it was no bad one, I believe, since here we are?"

"I do not say," replied Andrea, "that you never make a good one; but let us see your plan."

"Well," pursued Caderousse, "can you, without expending one sou, put me in the way of getting fifteen thousand francs? No, fifteen thousand are not enough; I cannot again become an honest man with less than thirty thousand francs."

"No," replied Andrea, dryly, "no, I cannot."

"I do not think you understand me," replied Caderousse, calmly, "I said without your laying out a sou."

"Do you want me to commit a robbery to spoil all my good fortune — and yours with mine — and both of us to be dragged down there again?"

"It would make very little difference to me," said Caderousse, "if I were retaken; I am a poor creature to live alone, and sometimes pine for my old comrades, not like you, heartless creature, who would be glad never to see them again!"

Andrea did more than tremble this time—he turned pale.

"Come, Caderousse, no nonsense!" said he.

"Don't alarm yourself, my little Benedetto, but just point out to me some means of gaining those thirty thousand francs without your assistance; and I will contrive it."

"Well, I will see. I will recollect you," said Andrea.

"Meanwhile you will raise my month to five hundred francs, my little fellow? I have a fancy, and mean to keep a housekeeper."

"Well, you shall have your five hundred francs," said Andrea; "but it is very hard for me, my poor Caderousse—you take advantage——"

"Bah!" said Caderousse, "when you have access to countless stores!"

One would have said Andrea anticipated his companion's words, so did his eye flash like lightning, but it was but for a moment.

"True," he replied, "and my protector is very kind."

"That dear protector," said Caderousse: "and how much does he give you monthly?"

"Five thousand francs."

"As many thousands as you give me hundreds! Truly, it is only bastards who are thus fortunate. Five thousand francs per month! what the devil can you do with all that?"

"Oh! it is no trouble to spend that: and I am like you—I want a capital."

"A capital! yes—I understand—every one would like a capital."

"Well! and I shall get one."

"Who will give it to you — your prince?"

"Yes, my prince! But unfortunately I must wait."

"You must wait for what?" asked Caderousse.

"For his death."

"The death of your prince?"

"Yes."

"How so?"

"Because he has made his will in my favor."

"Indeed?"

"On my honor!"

"For how much?"

"For five hundred thousand."

"Only that! It's little enough."

"But so it is."

"No, it cannot be!"

"Are you my friend, Caderousse?"

"Yes, in life or death."

"Well, I will tell you a secret."

"What is it?"

"But remember —"

"Ah, *pardieu*! mute as a carp."

"Well, I think ——"

Andrea stopped and looked around him.

"You think! Do not fear; *pardieu*! we are alone."

"I think I have discovered my father."

"Your true father?"

"Yes."

"Not old Cavalcanti?"

"No, for he is gone again, the true one, as you say."

"And that father is ——"

"Well! Caderousse, it is Monte-Cristo."

"Bah?"

"Yes; you understand, that explains all. He cannot acknowledge me openly, it appears, but he does it through M. Cavalcanti, and gives him fifty thousand francs for it."

"Fifty thousand francs for being your father! I would have done it for half that — for twenty thousand, for

fifteen thousand; why did you not think of me, ungrateful man?"

"Did I know anything about it, when it was all done when I was down there?"

"Ah, truly! And you say that by his will ——"

"He leaves me five hundred thousand livres."

"Are you sure of it?"

"He showed it me; but that is not all; there is a codicil, as I said just now."

"Probably."

"And in that codicil he acknowledges me."

"Oh! the good father; the brave father! the very honest father!" said Caderousse, twirling a plate in the air between his two hands.

"Now, say if I conceal anything from you!"

"No; and your confidence makes you honorable in my opinion. And your princely father, is he rich—very rich?"

"Yes, in truth; he does not himself know the amount of his fortune."

"Is it possible?"

"It is evident enough to me, who am always at his house. The other day, a banker's clerk brought him fifty thousand francs in a portfolio about the size of your plate; yesterday, his banker brought him a hundred thousand francs in gold."

Caderousse was filled with wonder; the young man's words sounded to him like metal; and he thought he could hear the rushing of cascades of louis.

"And you go into that house?" cried he, briskly.

"When I like."

Caderousse was thoughtful for a moment. It was easy to perceive he was revolving some important idea in his mind. Then suddenly he cried:

"How I should like to see all that, how beautiful it must be!"

"It is, in fact, magnificent," said Andrea.

"And does he not live in the Champs Elysées?"

"Yes, No. 30."

"Ah!" said Caderousse, "No. 30."

"Yes, a fine house, standing alone, between a courtyard and a garden: you must know it."

"Possibly, but it is not the exterior I care for; it is the interior; what beautiful furniture there must be in it!"

"Have you ever seen the Tuileries?"

"No."

"Well, it surpasses that."

"It must be worth one's while to stoop, Andrea, when that good M. Monte-Cristo lets fall his purse."

"It is not worth while to wait for that," said Andrea; "money is as plentiful in that house as fruit in an orchard."

"But you should take me there one day with you."

"How can I? On what plea?"

"You are right; but you have made my mouth water; I must absolutely see it; I shall find a way."

"No nonsense, Caderousse!"

"I will offer myself as polisher."

"The rooms are all carpeted."

"Well, then, I must be contented to imagine it."

"That is the best plan, believe me."

"Try, at least, to give me an idea of what it is."

"How can I?"

"Nothing is easier. Is it large?"

"Middling."

"How is it arranged?"

"Faith, I should require pen, ink, and paper, to make a plan."

"They are all here," said Caderousse, briskly.

He fetched from an old secrétaire a sheet of white paper, and also pen and ink.

"Here," said Caderousse, "trace me all that on the paper, my boy." Andrea took the pen with an imperceptible smile, and began:

"The house, as I said, is between the court and the garden; in this way, do you see?"

Andrea traced the garden, the court, and the house.

"High walls?"

"Not more than eight or ten feet."

"That is not prudent," said Caderousse.

"In the court are orange-trees in pots, turf, and clumps of flowers."

"And no steel traps?"

"No."

"The stables?"

"Are on either side of the gate, which you see there."

And Andrea continued his plan.

"Let us see the ground floor," said Caderousse.

"On the ground floor, dining-room, two drawing-rooms, billiard-rooms, staircase in the hall, and little back staircase."

"Windows?"

"Magnificent windows, so beautiful, so large, that I believe a man of your size could pass through each frame."

"Why the devil have they any stairs with such windows?"

"Luxury has everything."

"Any shutters?"

"Yes, but they are never used. That Count of Monte-Cristo is an original, who loves to look at the sky even at night."

"And where do the servants sleep?"

"Oh! they have a house to themselves. Picture to yourself a pretty coach-house at the right-hand side where the ladders are kept. Well, over that coach-house are the servants' rooms, with bells corresponding with the different apartments."

"Ah, *diable!* bells, did you say?"

"What do you mean?"

"Oh, nothing! I only say they cost a load of money to hang; and what is the use of them, I should like to know?"

"There used to be a dog let loose in the yard at night; but it has been taken to the house at Auteuil — to that you went to, you know."

"Yes."

"I was saying to him only yesterday, 'You are imprudent, M. le comte; for when you go to Auteuil, and take your servants, the house is left unprotected.'

"'Well,' said he, 'what next?'

"'Well, next, some day you will be robbed.'"

"What did he answer? "

"He quietly said, 'What do I care if I am?'

"Andrea, he has some secrétaire with a spring."

"How do you know? "

"Yes, which catches the thief in a trap and plays a tune. I was told there were such at the last exhibition."

"He has simply a mahogany secrétaire, in which the key is always kept."

"And he is not robbed? "

"No; his servants are all devoted to him."

"There ought to be some money in that secrétaire? "

"There may be. No one knows what there is."

"And where is it? "

"On the first floor."

"Sketch me the plan of that floor, as you have done of the ground floor, my boy."

"That is very simple." Andrea took the pen. "On the first story, do you see, there are the anteroom and drawing-room; to the right of the drawing-room, a library and a study; to the left, a bedroom and a dressing-room. The famous secrétaire is in the dressing-room."

"Is there a window in the dressing-room? "

"Two — one here and one there."

Andrea sketched two windows in the room, which formed an angle on the plan, and appeared a smaller square added to the long square of the bedroom. Caderousse became thoughtful.

"Does he often go to Auteuil? " added he.

"Two or three times a week. To-morrow, for instance, he is going to spend the day and night there."

"Are you sure of it?"

"He has invited me to dine there."

"There is a life, for instance," said Caderousse — "a town-house and a country-house."

"That's what it is to be rich."

"And shall you dine there?"

"Probably."

"When you dine there, do you sleep there?"

"If I like, I am at home there."

Caderousse looked at the young man, as if to get at the truth from the bottom of his heart. But Andrea drew a cigar-case from his pocket, took an Havana, quietly lit it, and began smoking.

"When do you want your five hundred francs?" said he to Caderousse.

"Now, if you have them."

Andrea took five and twenty louis from his pocket.

"Yellow boys?" said Caderousse; "no, I thank you."

"Oh! you despise them!"

"On the contrary, I esteem them, but will not have them."

"You can exchange them, idiot; gold is worth five sous."

"Exactly: and he who changes them will follow friend Caderousse, lay hands on him, and demand what farmers pay him their rent in gold. No nonsense, my good fellow; silver simply, round coins, with the head of some monarch or other on them. Anybody may possess a five-franc piece."

"But do you suppose I carry five hundred francs about with me? I should want a porter."

"Well, leave them with your porter — he is to be trusted; I will call for them."

"To-day?"

"No, to-morrow; I shall not have time to-day."

"Well, to-morrow I will leave them when I go to Auteuil."

"May I depend on it?"

"Certainly."

"Because I shall secure my housekeeper on the strength of it."

"Stop! will that be all — eh? And will you not torment me any more?"

"Never."

Caderousse had become so gloomy, that Andrea feared he should be obliged to notice the change. He redoubled his gayety and carelessness.

"How sprightly you are!" said Caderousse; "one would say you were already in possession of your property."

"No, unfortunately, but when I do obtain it——"

"Well?"

"I shall remember old friends — I only tell you that."

"Yes, since you have such a good memory."

"What do you want? I thought you had ransomed me."

"I? What an idea! I, who am going to give you another piece of good advice."

"What is it?"

"To leave behind you the diamond you have on your finger. We shall both get into trouble. You will ruin both yourself and me by your folly."

"How so?" said Andrea.

"How! You put on livery, you disguise yourself as a servant, and yet keep a diamond on your finger worth four or five thousand francs."

"You guess well."

"I know something of diamonds; I have had some."

"You do well to boast of it," said Andrea, who without becoming angry, as Caderousse feared, at this new extortion, quietly resigned the ring. Caderousse looked so closely at it, that Andrea well knew that he was examining if all the edges were perfect.

"It is a false diamond," said Caderousse.

"You are joking now," replied Andrea.

"Do not be angry — we can try it."

Caderousse went to the window, touched the glass with it, and found it would cut.

"*Confiteor!*" said Caderousse, putting the diamond on his little finger; "I was mistaken; but those thieves of jewelers imitate so well, that it is no longer worth while to rob a jeweler's shop; it is another branch of industry paralyzed."

"Have you finished now?" said Andrea; "do you want anything more? will you have my waistcoat or my certificate? Make free, now you have begun."

"No; you are, after all, a good companion; I will not detain you, and will try to cure myself of my ambition."

"But take care the same thing does not happen to you in selling the diamond you feared with the gold."

"I shall not sell it — do not fear."

"Not at least till the day after to-morrow," thought the young man.

"Happy rogue!" said Caderousse; "you are going to find your servants, your horses, your carriage, and your betrothed."

"Yes," said Andrea.

"Well, I hope you will make me a handsome wedding present the day you marry Mademoiselle Danglars."

"I have already told you it is a fancy you have taken in your head."

"What fortune has she?"

"But I tell you ——"

"A million?"

Andrea shrugged up his shoulders.

"Let it be a million," said Caderousse; "you can never have so much as I wish you."

"Thank you," said the young man.

"Oh, I wish it you with all my heart!" added Cade-

rousse, with his hoarse laugh. "Stop, let me show you the way."

"It is not worth while."

"Yes, it is."

"Why?"

"Because there is a little secret — a precaution I thought it desirable to take — one of Huret and Fitchet's locks, revised and improved by Gaspard Caderousse; I will manufacture you a similar one when you are a capitalist."

"Thank you," said Andrea; "I will let you know a week beforehand."

They parted. Caderousse remained on the landing until he had not only seen Andrea go down the three stories, but also across the court. Then he returned hastily, shut his door carefully, and began to study, like a clever architect, the plan Andrea had left him.

"Dear Benedetto," said he, "I think he will not be sorry to inherit his fortune, and he who hastens the day when he can touch his five hundred thousand will not be his worst friend."

END OF VOLUME III.



